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THURSDAY, JANUARY 30TH, 2014



2014 VALE OF GLAMORGAN BUILDING EXCELLENCE AWARDS 8-PAGE SPECIAL



Cancellation despair for eye patient Angelica (65)



LEFT:
Angelica says she
is crossing her
fingers that the
latest appointment
isn't cancelled at
the last moment.

A BARRY woman who suffers from severe glaucoma says she is disgusted that the University Hospital of Wales cancelled three of her appointments, writes **TIM CHAPMAN**.

Angelica Ross, aged 65, said that although she is designated an 'urgent' case, she began to wonder when she would be seen.

"I have been an outpatient of the ophthalmology department for approximately 15 years for glaucoma in both eyes.

"Recently, I developed cataracts in both eyes. I had the left cataract removed after one cancelled appointment.

"The right eye is more damaged with glaucoma, so I was put on a list as 'urgent', because I was told delaying treatment would lead to even more damage in my eye.

"Since October 9 last year, I have had three appointments cancelled. I was so disgusted that I have resorted to making an official complaint to the hospital, which will be investigated in February."

She said that when the third appointment was cancelled she was in tears.

(CONTINUED
ON PAGE 5)

SCHOOL UNIFORM DAY - FOR THE STAFF!



Barry Comprehensive School staff enjoyed being in school uniform recently - and all for a good cause! SEE PAGE 6 FOR FULL STORY

JAIL FOR A SEX PEST WHO BREACHED RESTRAINING ORDER

A SEX pest who repeatedly breached a restraining order and put five women in "real fear", has been jailed for 18 months at Cardiff Crown Court, writes **AJ SICLUNA**.

Mark Maxwell, 23, of Mountjoy Crescent, Penarth, had pleaded guilty before Cardiff magistrates to five offences of breaching a sexual offences

prevention order by loitering in a public place and causing harassment, alarm and distress.

Said Judge Tom Crowther, QC: "It is clear the harassment was carefully directed and Maxwell could not control his impulses." He added: "You have made a disturbing return to your old ways."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

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'FREE HOSPITAL BED LOG JAM'

HAVING read your article about Paul Preece and the truly wonderful treatment he received at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, I would like to send my very best wishes to Paul for his recovery.

The NHS can really be congratulated, but I read with sorrow that his recovery is 'on hold' now he is back in Wales, while he waits for a specialist rehab bed somewhere, such as

Rookwood. Presumably someone is waiting for the bed Paul is in at Heath Hospital – surely something can be done to unblock this log jam?

I must also add my admiration for Paul's family, who have coped so well, keeping their businesses running and managing to support Paul through what must have been a very traumatic time.

We are fortunate to still have a traditional, family-run fruit and veg shop, and sweet shop, in Cowbridge.

Sarah Smith, Cowbridge.

'Build village on brown field site'

THE consultation period is over and the high jinx begin – with the Welsh Government, apparently, not too keen at all!

After all the traffic surveys, representations and opposition to the development at Wyecock Cross, sense seemed to prevail. Oh, but no...

Apparently, Barry has escaped far too easily, and country folk are upset.

It may be a little out of the box for some, but can I suggest instead of ripping apart yet more green fields – if indeed, the Welsh Government really believes we need more housing (I for one haven't seen the new population growth fig-

ures due at the end of last year) that we look for a large, brown field site?

Let's employ a developer with vision and build something to be proud of – a village with a green and a pond, shops, transport and eco homes that people can afford to live in.

I think we can safely say Barry has had as much as it can bear of bland, boring, caravan site-inspired developments, built by those who only care about money and with no thought of sustainability.

There would be an added advantage to folks who don't seem keen on their grown-up offspring living in the same village – a comfortable buffer zone!

Sue Eldridge, Barry.

'Potholes caused by 40 tonners'

WHAT do other GEM readers think about the Vale's Big Fill campaign? Do you think it's working? It certainly hasn't on Baron's Close/Stallcourt.

Do you know of anywhere else that's in dire need of resurfacing/filling email: thebigfill@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/

Why do we have potholes? The Vale Council says that they are caused by erosion and road surfaces get increasingly porous and absorb rainwater. Frost also affects surfaces, as does movement of vehicles.

However, we are not told that erosion is mainly due to the massive increase in lorry weight, which has caused the current glut of potholes. Asphalt is too thin for 40 tonners to be rumbling down our roads/motorways.

When the council accepts low cost resurfacing tenders, we get what the council pays for. I believe the UK had EU grants to strengthen bridges, but did we get anything to strengthen our road surfaces?

Robert Gant, Llantwit Major.

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We will (in certain circumstances) protect a writer's identity, if requested. Please keep your letters BRIEF and address them to: The Editor, DON JOHN, at Glamorgan GEM Ltd, Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF71 7E OR email gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk

Plan to merge Vale with Cardiff is a step too far

THE new proposals from the Williams Commission to merge the Vale of the Glamorgan Council with Cardiff City Council is a step too far.

Anyone with experience of local government in Wales recognises that there are some councils that are struggling to deliver services partly because of their financial positions and their small populations.

But why demolish the Vale when it is financially sound and none of its services are in special measures imposed by the Welsh Assembly?

The last amalgamations in the 1990s by a UK Conservative Government were apparently designed to improve local government. Clearly these changes did not improve all local government bodies in Wales, given the present situation.

I write with some considerable experience of councils, since I was previously a local councillor serving for 22 years on the former South Glamorgan County Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

The Williams Commission report appears to believe that one size fits all. It proposes to force neighbouring councils to join together, even if those councils are financially sound and delivering

'Better to link up with Bridgend'

WHAT'S the sense in Cardiff combining with Barry, but not, for example, with Caerphilly?

The western Vale looks more to Bridgend, hospital/waste/education... services may well be better combined with Bridgend's, as well as the rural/coastal character chiming with Bridgend's.

With the move to city-region planning for transport etc, why cut across it with what would amount to absorption of the Vale in part

of the Cardiff region?

The autocratic one-party rule with power switching in Cardiff has been crippling, with grandiose business plans rammed through and no party prepared to take vital changes to tackle the car domination/congestion.

One-party rule is far from democratic – let's bring in PR voting (proportional representation) and properly adopt coalition politics with cross-party decision making – with public debate a reality, instead of tame focus groups.

Max Wallis, Barry.

'Impact of solar panels localised'

TO have solar panels or not is the current debate in the Vale. Current popular belief is that we must have renewable sources of 'greenhouse gas free' energy.

Popular belief may be misguided. Climate is always changing, always has been and always will be, until science can control the sun's variance of radiation emissions.

Solar panels at least utilise this energy, whatever the climate.

The impact on the environment is relatively small, but localised.

What if the site became a wind farm?

It would be an environmental eyesore, higher bills and an energy system that cannot guarantee output, backed up by other sources of energy, currently carbon-powered stations!

The setting of the solar panels is manmade anyway, and siting the panels is just another utilisation of the land.

The land owner has the right to maximise his return. To some it is an eyesore, but others find a strange beauty in them.

The only sure thing is solar panels or no solar panels will have no effect on climate change.

John Owen, Cowbridge.

their local services successfully.

The report does not explain why Swansea, population 240,000, is allowed to remain unchanged, while Cardiff (population 345,000) must merge with the Vale of Glamorgan to make a local government of some 475,000.

I strongly believe that the Vale of Glamorgan should remain unchanged. There is a real danger that Cardiff, who are apparently short of building space, will see the Vale as the logical place to build more housing in green fields.

Michael Sharp, Barry.

THINK TWICE ON 'GAGGING LAW'

IN a true democracy, everyone in society should be able to express their view; the proposed 'gagging law' will prevent that being possible.

The politicians are not looking at it closely enough and it will just pass through if we are not careful.

You can see from other charities like Royal British Legion, Oxfam, RSPB that it isn't just isolated individuals who care and have grave concerns about this law.

Make the politicians aware that we need them to think very carefully before casting their vote.

Marilyn Thompson, Peterston super Ely.

'Sinister threat to freedom of speech'

WHEN will our elected MP get the message that constituents have been sending him regarding the so-called Gagging Law?

This bill, which is currently progressing through Parliament with surprisingly little publicity, will severely limit the power of the people to publicly raise issues which are important to them.

In other words, our leaders are trying to remove our democratic right to freedom of speech. Mr Cairns has consistently toed the party line and supported the Government, despite numerous Conservative MPs honouring their constituents' wishes and voting against the Bill.

It has been made clear, through correspondence and petitions, that people in the Vale are against this sinister attempt to gag them.

R Wheatley, Barry.

Gap between rich and poor remains

THIS year marks the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War, when thousands of poor and unemployed men volunteered to lay down their lives.

Many of them were rejected because they were medically unfit, on account of rickets, an illness caused by under-nourishment and inadequate diet.

In one of the richest nations on the planet, the fruits of the earth were

divided so unjustly, that many citizens starved, while the nobility of 'Downton Abbey' were presented at court.

In 1914, it was the indifference and neglect, of the poor, by the wealthy, which must condemn them for ever.

The present Government has gone much further, not only in their subservience to bankers and media magnates, but in a determined policy, that deprives and depresses the living standards of the poor.

CN Westerman, Brynna.

BUS LIFE LINE TERMINATED?

ON reading The GEM, I was interested in an article on the new bus service to connect Vale villages from March 10.

Good news, I thought, as the villages through the Vale are deprived of a decent service similar to that of Barry.

However, on reaching the end of the article, I was horrified to see that to accommodate the new service route of the 303/304 and service 95 in the evening provided by New Adventure Travel, there is to be a reroute – leaving a vast area in Barry without a bus service.

For those who did not read the end of the article, it means that there will be no evening serv-

ice after the last Cardiff Bus 95 covering Crogan Hill, Dyfan Road, St Brides Way, Pencoedre Road, Bridge Street and Coldbrook Road.

The Coldbrook Estate from the Three Bells will still have the 94 service provided by Cardiff Bus.

This is quite a large area and even if the passenger levels are low, the new 95 route along Gladstone Road and Cardiff Road will carry even less.

Are the residents of the area concerned aware that their lifeline is being terminated?

Those (including me) who need this evening service, face a heavy expenditure of taxi fares or should we give in, stop work and stay at home?

David Carr, Barry.

Service vital for bus pass users

IREAD with astonishment comments made by Coun Lis Burnett in reference to the alleged possible changes to the bus system in the Vale and the possible changes or curtailment of the 95 service to Barry Island.

Coun Burnett, cabinet member for regeneration, innovation, planning and transportation, stated in your columns that the termination of bus services to Barry Island would still benefit from a regular rail service from Barry Island to Barry and Cardiff.

Does this councillor realise that to travel to Barry or Cardiff using the so-called regular rail service, costs up to and sometimes over three times the cost of the current bus service?

Does she also realise that there is only one train stop on Barry Island which has no adequate park and ride facility and can be compared

to at least five more convenient bus stops on the Island?

The Plaid Cymru ward councillors, along with the Barry First Group, campaigned tirelessly for a new footbridge at Barry Island station to improve the rail link to Barry and Cardiff, only to find after planning approval to replace the former unsafe bridge, that the most important part of the development was overlooked.

The rear approach to the station and footbridge was left completely inaccessible to the rail station, due to the fact that the said approach has been permanently fenced off.

This denied access for park and ride facilities and, in some remote cases, denied access for disabled people.

The bus service is essential to those without their own transport and to those who rely on their bus passes.

Barrie V Evans, (Group Coordinator Barry First Group/Barry Voice).

HIGH TIDE TIMES (UNTIL FEBRUARY 6)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary.

For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time	Ht	Time	Ht
	AM	M	PM	M
30 Thur	05.39	9.9	18.07	10.0
31 Fri	06.30	10.4	18.57	10.3
01 Sat	07.17	10.6	19.41	10.4
02 Sun	08.02	10.8	20.22	10.5
03 Mon	08.48	10.6	21.07	10.1
04 Tues	09.28	10.3	21.49	9.6
05 Wed	10.08	9.5	22.22	9.1
06 Thur	10.52	8.9	23.14	8.4

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.

'I fear a fatality on Dinas bend' - SAYS LOCAL RESIDENT

RIGHT: A Dinas Powys resident claims more needs to be done to ensure road safety in Dinas Powys - in the last incident, a car ended up hitting a lamp post and fence.

A Dinas Powys resident says she is concerned that there will one day be a road traffic fatality at the Eastbrook end of the village, writes **TIM CHAPMAN**.

The woman, who does not want to be identified, said that over



the years, there had been a number of instances in which vehicles on the bend, coming from the direction of Cardiff, had collided with the crash barrier or fencing.

She explained: "The last incident took place on December 15 at

9.15pm. A car came into Dinas Powys and collided with a street light and fencing. It ended up on its roof.

"Neighbours ran out to help and fortunately the occupants of the car, a man and a woman, were able to get out.

"It was the second crash in the same spot that year. One day there will be a fatality."

The woman says she favours the installation of a speed camera as drivers approach the bend.

In the five years up to March 30, 2013, South Wales Police recorded three personal injuries in accidents at that location, although the local resident claims there have been many incidents in which people were fortunate enough to escape without injury.

A few years ago, the Vale Council undertook

a speed survey and installed a flashing 30mph sign as people approached Dinas Powys.

The woman claimed more needs to be done. "Surely prevention is better than the cure, and a camera might provide that," she insisted.

• The Vale Council told The GEM it would examine the issues raised by the resident.

Paul Gay, group engineer for highways traffic said: "The concerns raised by the resident of Dinas Powys, as with all similar concerns raised by residents throughout the Vale, will be investigated by the council's traffic management team.

"Should there be evidence of a traffic problem, then remedial action will be identified and implemented where appropriate," he added.

SEX PEST JAILED

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The women involved, he said, had been put in "real fear".

Prosecutor Hash Salman said that on June 12, a foreign student was jogging on Penarth esplanade when Maxwell, who was on a cycle, spoke to her and rode away.

She felt afraid because he was "looking strangely at her." Two days later, she saw Maxwell again on Penarth Pier and he stared at her, making her even more frightened.

On June 17, a woman who was jogging alone in Cosmeston Park sensed someone approaching her from behind. She sprinted in the opposite direction as Maxwell stared at her.

Five days later, a woman was jogging in the same park when Maxwell began following her on his cycle. She said "What's your problem, mate?" He laughed and rode away.

On June 26 in Archer Road, a woman was jogging towards the Pier and she spotted Maxwell and felt nervous.

On June 27, he approached a woman

jogger in Stanwell Road and followed her, causing her to become concerned. She telephoned her father and ran home.

The court heard that Maxwell had been sentenced to 18 months in a Young Offender Institution for sexual assault and attempted sexual assault. That was when the sexual offences prevention order was imposed.

That case involved four lone female adults in the Penarth area, said Mr Salman, and they felt shocked, unsafe and unnerved.

The ages of the women in the present case ranged from 19 to 53.

Martin Kelly for Maxwell, said "I have to accept that this is a difficult case for all concerned. Until this matter, his family had not been aware of any problems.

"He has insight into his behaviour, and is aware of its impact. He is gauche and immature, and though people were frightened, they were not hurt."

He was ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £120.

COLCOT PUPILS LEARN ABOUT HEALTHY LIVING

Amanda Morgan from The Beauty Spot taught the children about aromatherapy.



AS part of 'Healthy Living' week at Colcot Primary, the children took part in many exciting and interesting activities to help learn how to keep their bodies healthy.

They made a variety of food products including smoothies, soups, salads and fruit kebabs.

Among activities was a training session with Mark Dodds' Total Training, which focused on keeping fit, as part of healthy living.

They also had a visit from Amanda Morgan from 'The Beauty Spot', who taught the children about aromatherapy.

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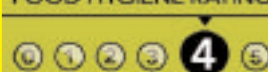
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Holton Road traders ask for 'flexibility' in parking restrictions



ABOVE: Ferda Ulug of La Cucina presents Coun Ian Johnson with a petition from the local business community.

HOLTON ROAD traders have endorsed a petition pleading with the Vale Council to rethink its local parking policy.

Currently, Holton Road has parking bays with loading times for businesses which run from 6am in the morning until midday.

Members of the public who use them during that period of time are likely to return to their car and find a parking penalty on the windscreen.

Last year, The GEM featured local businessman Ferda Ulug, who owns La Cucina, on the corner of Holton Road and Regent Street. He argued that the bays should be available to members of the public from 10am, warning that people who had received penalties would decide not to shop in Barry town centre.

On Friday, January 25, Ferda presented a petition to local councillor Ian

Johnson, requesting that the Vale Council consider more flexible use of the bays. Thirty local business owners or shop managers have signed the petition.

Coun Johnson told The GEM he would be passing it on to Vale Council officers who he hoped would look into the matter.

Coun Johnson said: "There are two things that could be looked at. Do we need all the bays for loading? Could the time in bays be moved to 10am to make more parking spaces available?"

"The petition is an indication to the Vale Council that traders are unhappy with the present circumstances."

Coun Johnson said that the right balance needed to be struck in the use of warden and parking bays – emphasising that in residential streets off Holton Road many residents had welcomed the arrival of wardens.

JOIN TALL SHIP CREW!

BARRY Town Council, in association with the Tall Ships Trust, has launched the Barry Marine Youth Award for 2014 – which will involve an all-expenses paid voyage, in UK waters, sailing as a member of the crew aboard the tall ship Stavros S Niarchos.

The award, available to Barry residents aged 12 to 25 years, will offer the opportunity to make new friends and enjoy unique challenges.

Applicants need to complete an application form and submit a short written statement of 500 words about 'Life in Barry 100 years ago' and also

a short statement detailing 'What winning the competition would mean to me.' Applications are welcome in English or Welsh.

The deadline for applications is Saturday, March 15 and winners will be selected by March 31.

Further details and application forms can be obtained from Barry Town Council on 01446 738663 or by emailing info@barrytowncouncil.gov.uk.

Applications should be sent to Barry Town Council/Tall Ships Competition, Council Offices, 7 Gladstone Road, Barry, CF62 8NA.

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'Friends of Weycock Cross' oppose Farm development

THE 'Friends of Weycock Cross' met local MP Alun Cairns to discuss the next stage of their objections to proposals to build on Green Farm, the area of land between Pontypridd Road and the Cwm Ciddy public house.

Although a planning application for the site was rejected recently by Vale planners, Mr Cairns and the Friends of Weycock Cross are concerned that Taylor Wimpey have appealed to the Welsh Government for approval.

Government inspector will now consider the matter and the process could take several forms.

Friends of Weycock Cross are calling for a planning inquiry, which takes the form of a hearing, with the Planning Inspector sitting as a judge.

The campaign group and Mr Cairns are calling on the local community to back the campaign. Mr Cairns said: "We have won the battle against the odds up to now and we are keen to maintain the momentum. The developer will naturally try to gain planning on this site and we need to be ready. I hope that the Welsh

Government do not overrule the objections.

"We will call a meeting together shortly to advise the community to ask residents to make their views known."

Frank Cleland of Friends of Weycock Cross explained: "The fight is not over and we must continue as there is always the risk that the appeal will succeed."

"We did everything to convince the Local Authority that this application should be rejected and need to keep up the pressure. A similar situation has happened with applications in Wenvoe. We need to stay alert for any new applications that could come forward."

Debra Cleland added: "If the authority were able to challenge the housing target of 10,000 minimum, as recently outlined in the draft LDP, that would strengthen our hand considerably."

"The Welsh Government's response to the draft LDP is also concerning in that it calls for more development in Barry."

"We need to guard against this being used at appeal or any future planning application."

ANGELICA'S DESPAIR

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Angelica's daughter Xenia, who lives in west Wales, acts as her chauffeur for hospital appointments, and an extra frustration has been that Xenia has arranged to have days off work only for them to be wasted.

In despair, Angelica wrote to local MP Alun Cairns, who agreed to look into the case.

She said: "I have just received another appointment for my eye surgery on February 5. I don't know whether it was because Mr Cairns wrote to the chief executive and that made a difference or because I was due to receive an appointment anyway."

"I am still half expecting it to be cancelled. It is disgusting that I had to go to these lengths to get an appointment. I have struggled on other occasions to get outpatient appointments in the past."

At the moment, Angelica puts drops into her eyes to ensure the pressure is correct. The vision in her left eye is good, but she still has concern about her right eye which suffers from 'blurry' vision.

The GEM put Angelica's concerns to the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

Lee Davies, the head of operations and delivery for the UHB's surgery clinical board, said he was unable to discuss individual cases, but

apologised to anyone who had been delayed.

He explained: "The health board has been investing in the cataract theatre at University Hospital of Wales which has led to delays for some patients for which we apologise."

"This work is one of a number of projects improving our ophthalmology service."

"These include developing improved pathways for patients as well as nurse-led clinics, which will help us to manage the increase in referrals the service has seen in recent years and improve patient care."

Police appeal



POLICE are appealing for information regarding the whereabouts of a Barry man, Aaron Harding (30), who is wanted on suspicion of assault.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Barry police station on 101, or Crimestoppers, free and in confidence, on 0800 555111 (quoting reference 62130395251).

Mayor's charity boost

LAST week, Barry Town Mayor, Coun Claire Curtis, hosted a coffee morning at the Mayor's Parlour in support of her charities, Ty Hapus and The Jamie Anderson Memorial Fund.

Joined by Jane Hutt, AM for the Vale, and the Mayors of Cowbridge and Penarth, Coun Curtis raised funds with Fairtrade refreshments and a raffle.

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Samson, hot dogs, and baked beans!

ALL Saints Church, Penarth, held two special services this month focused on the Bible story of Samson, who was given incredible strength by God, but lost everything through choosing to go his own way.

At Messy Church on Sunday, January 19, families enjoyed Samson-related activities, including making mad hairbands, testing their weightlifting ability and building their own Lego temples.

Samson's story was acted out, with audience participation, and we sang the song 'Be bold, be strong' - before everyone gathered on the

gallery for a delicious tea of hot dogs and baked beans!

At a packed family service on January 26, we revisited the Samson theme. A three-part reading of Samson's birth announcement led into Rev Peter Cox's address, and All Saints ensemble musicians accompanied hymns, while the youth group led the worship song 'I will offer up my life'. An original worship song by Nigel Lloyd-Latham preceded the prayers, which were led by the Casey family.

The next Messy Church is on February 16 at 4pm, with a related family service on Sunday, February 23 at 10 am. Visit www.all-saints-penarth.org.uk for more details. **MG**

Forum visits 'Hell on Earth'

AFTER a very pleasant, belated Christmas lunch at The Casa Paco, the speaker at last week's Barry Men's Forum was Mrs Jeanne Harvey, who gave an extremely interesting talk to entitled 'Hell in Paradise', based upon a visit to Norfolk Island in the Pacific to visit her son-in-law.

She commenced with the history of the Island, which was named in 1774 by Captain Cook. In 1788, the first convicts were transported to Australia, and a small party of eight men, six women convicts, and eight freemen were landed on the island, which then became the second British settlement in the Pacific.

The prison governors were extremely brutal towards the prisoners. A mutiny in 1834 resulted in a clergyman being sent from Britain to adjudicate on the sentences of the men.

It is recorded that those sentenced to death thanked God, while those whose sentence was rescinded cried in anguish.

Jeanne went on to detail the influence that the 'Bligh Mutineer' had on the island.

Today there are 1,100

residents; life is very relaxed but very hard in numerous ways. There is still no port, and because of the reef totally surrounding Norfolk Island, all imports have to be transferred from a ship moored off shore, in calm weather, into Lighters - small boats. She showed some photographs of trucks precarious loaded across two boats being brought ashore.

Water is also a problem. As there are no springs, rainwater is collected by each residence, and use is limited to half a bucket a day per person for all purposes.

When a resident dies all flags are flown at half mast, and the funeral is always held at 4.30pm, when all shops, etc, close and everyone attends.

The Barry Men's Forum meets every Thursday morning at 10.15am until noon. The meetings are held at the new Trinity Presbyterian Church Hall in Aberystwyth Crescent.

On Thursday, February 6, the speaker will be Mrs Clare Smith, who will talk with the title 'The Fine Art of Murder'.

For further information, contact the chairman Peter Westcott on 02920 594881. **PMW**

Help with changes to Housing Benefit

Working-age people living in social housing now receive Housing Benefit based on the number of people in their household and the size of their accommodation. Pensioners are not affected by this change.

This change helps families who live in overcrowded accommodation or on waiting lists to find a new home. People who rent from private landlords already get Housing Benefit in this way, and this makes it fair for everyone.

If you are affected, you should have heard from your council.

There is support to help you manage these changes, including:

- thinking about downsizing or 'home swapping' to a different sized property
- finding a job or increasing your hours can make you better off
- applying to your council for a Discretionary Housing Payment.

Find out more about all your options at www.gov.uk/housing-benefit or talk to your council.



Help gyda newidiadau i Fudd-dal Tai

Mae pobl o oedran gweithio sy'n byw mewn tai cymdeithasol yn cael Budd-dal Tai yn seiliedig ar y nifer o bobl sydd yn eu cartref a maint eu llety. **Ni chaff pensesynwyr eu heffeithio gan y newid hwn.**

Mae'r newid hwn yn helpu teuluoedd sy'n byw mewn llety gorllawn neu ar restrau eros i ddod o hyd i gartref newydd. Mae pobl sy'n rhentu gan landlordiaid preifat eisoes yn cael Budd-dal Tai yn y modd hwn, ac mae hyn yn ei gwneud yn deg i bawb.

Os cewch eich effeithio, dylech fod wedi dywedd gan eich cyngor.

Mae cymorth ar gael i'ch helpu i reoli'r newidiadau hyn:

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NEW SCOUT GROUP'S APPEAL IN PENARTH



ABOVE:

12th Penarth, a new Scout group in the town, recently held its investitures at St Joseph school.

LAST term saw the opening of a new Scout group in Penarth – the 12th Penarth based at St Joseph school – thanks to the headteacher Mr Rein. The group opened with a new Beaver Scout Colony for boys and girls aged six to eight and was quickly followed by a Cub Scout pack for boys and girls aged eight to 10 and half.

Julian Jordan, district commissioner for Penarth and District Scouts, said: "It's great to be able to offer Scouting to another 40 young people, but we are again hitting capacity issues for both these age groups around the district. We have the space for more, but need more adults to open these spaces up."

The picture, left, was taken after the young people from both age groups, took their promise and received their group neckerchiefs.

To find out more about Scouting, contact Julian Jordan District Commissioner Julian@penarthdistrict.org.uk or 0330 330 1907.

'Merger could end up with the Vale being 'fed crumbs from the table'

A local councillor has warned that if Cardiff and the Vale councils are merged, the latter could expect little more than the 'crumbs from the table' – just as in the past, writes **TIM CHAPMAN**.

Llantwit Major councillor Gwyn John insisted it would effectively be 'a takeover' not a merger.

Last week, the cross-party Williams Commission recommended a huge over-haul of local government, reducing the number of councils in Wales from 22 to either 11 or 10.

Among the proposals is a merger of the Vale Council and Cardiff Council.

But Coun Gwyn John declared the commission's recommendations 'unimaginative and ill-conceived'.

Coun John said a clue to the future may lie in the past – Cardiff's dominance over the levers of power in the

old South Glamorgan Council.

"The report talks of a 'merger' for the Vale of Glamorgan while it is in fact a 'takeover'!

"I would remind council tax payers of the situation between 1974 and 1996 when the previous South Glamorgan County Council was in existence providing services in the Vale.

"There were 80 councillors on South Glamorgan, but only 19 represented areas in the whole of the Vale.

"It is not difficult to see that there was a dominant Cardiff representation which manifested itself in the allocation of money and the provision of services.

"The Vale was fed the crumbs from the table. This was evidenced by the lack of investment in secondary school buildings between 1974 and 1996 compared with what the Vale Council has done throughout the Vale and continues to do."

Coun John said that the unhealthy arrangement did have one redeeming feature.

"There was one chink of light in those years which was the existence of the former Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council which had a financial allocation from the then Welsh Office to provide some services.

"New leisure centres were provided throughout the Vale, playing fields were improved, community centres were built and OAP accommodation was constructed.

"There will be no tier of local government to provide anything in the Vale under these proposals and money for all services and projects will be decided upon in Cardiff."

Some people believe that if Cardiff 'merged' with the Vale, it might benefit the Vale because it could not concentrate all its multi-million pound projects in the capital.

Coun John believes the reverse

could be the case with Cardiff 'the prince' and the Vale 'the pauper'.

He said: "Planning decisions will be dealt with by Cardiff and our refuse collection policies will also be decided by this new council.

"We will be back to the bad old days when council tax payers in the Vale will be making huge financial contributions towards ambitious Cardiff projects which will have little benefit to anyone west of the capital.

"It is vitally important that the services provided by local government in this are safeguarded in this new proposed council.

"The final decision on this 'merger' will be taken by the Welsh Government and I call on our Assembly Member to stand up and be counted in her defence of local government in the Vale."

Barry school's support for LATCH charity



THE Barry Comprehensive School, which has been a long-standing supporter of LATCH, delivering presents to the oncology clinic at Llandough Hospital for many years, is now continuing to support the Children's Hospital at the University of Wales Hospital, in Cardiff.

At the end of last term, Welsh Baccalaureate students arranged a variety of activities to raise money for the charity.

Activities ranged from a Staff v Sixth Form football match, a cake sale, teachers in the

stocks, and a LATCH merchandise sale and a raffle.

The top raffle prize of a visit to the Houses of Parliament, donated by Alun Cairns MP, was won by sixth former Tom Durman.

On the last day of term, staff encouraged further donations by volunteering to spend the day wearing school uniform.

A group of sixth form students will be visiting the hospital to present the donation.

Thank you to everyone who took part in helping to support this very worthwhile charity.

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Pepper keeps the Penarth and District Ramblers on track..!

AS the wind and rain continues, underfoot paths are quite treacherous in places, and with the forecast of fine weather, leader Robin made a wise decision and moved his walk to a day later than planned, in order to take advantage of some dry weather.

Six walkers joined him and his spaniel, Pepper, on a beautiful sunny morning to explore the Heritage Coast with the added incentive of Sunday lunch at the Plough and Harrow Inn.

Heading up towards the walled garden at Dunraven Park, the group climbed the hill to Trwyn y Witch to enjoy brilliant clear views across Porthcawl to Swansea Bay, before slithering their way downhill through the mud, to join the cliff path.

As the path is now upgraded due to the fact the Wales Coast Path is part of it, a series of new gates replacing old stiles made the going easier, and steps pave the way down through the wooded Cwm Mawr.

Water was flowing everywhere after weeks of heavy rainfall with swollen brooks and lots of surface water, but the trek along the cliff top to Cwm Nash passed without incident.

Moving inland, the group trekked on by track, field and lane to the pub, which was really busy, and there was time to enjoy a civilised Sunday lunch and refreshing drink before thoughts had to return once more to walking.

On the return journey to the beach, there was a chance conversation with Bridgend Ramblers who were going the opposite way.

The open sand and rocky foreshore at Traeth Mawr, bathed in bright sunshine, beckoned them on towards Traeth Bach.

A huge solid mass of water gushed down the cliff at the Whitmore Stairs and again at Cwm Mawr, where the waterfall was crashing onto the rocks below.

Leaving the beach, a climb up the cliff path led to the ice house perched above the walled garden at Dunraven, which belonged to Dunraven Castle.

Surveying the view towards Porthcawl and walking through the peace and quiet of the walled garden, muddy boots and clothing were forgotten as the sun lit up the sky.

Programmes and membership advice can be obtained from Pam on 029 2025 5102.

JOY STRANGWARD

Gwyn says 'thank you' to his 200 well-wishers following BEM news



ABOVE Gwyn John will be officially presented with his BEM later this year.

REPORT by TIM CHAPMAN

A local councillor has thanked the dozens of people who have been in touch with him since he was awarded a British Empire Medal in the New Year's Honours List.

Coun Gwyn John was recognised for decades of service to grassroots football in Llantwit Major.

What amazed him was that following a GEM story revealing the news, so many people had taken the time to thank him by card, email and on the streets of his home town.

He has even had old pals whom he hasn't seen since the 1970s, getting in touch.

"I want to thank everyone for their good wishes - people have sent cards and emails,

and have been kind enough to stop me in Llantwit to shake my hand.

"I've heard from people as far away as America and Canada."

In the first edition of The GEM this year, we reported how Gwyn had received notice of being awarded the BEM on November 15, but had to keep it a secret until just before the New Year when it was officially announced.

In 1962, Gwyn helped to set up Llantwit Major Athletic Football Club and was the assistant secretary.

From that point on, he went on to serve local football as a player, coach, manager, club secretary and administrator.

The letters are still coming in. One arrived

from an old friend, Brian Lewis, who played in the first match of the reformed club in 1962.

"Brian lives in Kent and used to sit next to me in primary school, and he recalled the early days of the club and the first players."

Brendan Sullivan, whose father played for Gwyn in the mid-70s, got in touch too - Gwyn hadn't spoken to him for 40 years.

At a recent Swansea City match, Gwyn was walking down to the ground when former ref, Lyn Thomas, spotted him and shouted out his good wishes.

Ann Thomas, the former clerk of Llantwit Major, contacted him all the way from Canada.

Gwyn said: "Sid Robling, the coach of Bridgend Town FC dur-

ing its period of success in the 70s, send me a card, and we then had a chat on the phone."

"He's a smashing guy and we hadn't spoken since the 1974-75 season."

There's been some good-natured banter at the Vale Council where Gwyn represents Llantwit Major. The PA to Council Leader Neil Moore, Jaci, came in with a mug emblazoned 'Big G'!

"I've also had letters from the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, the Vale's Assembly Member, Jane Hutt, the Vale's MP Alun Cairns, Andrew RT Davies AM and Lord Lieutenant Peter Beck."

In all, Gwyn reckons he has had around 200 letters and emails.

He will soon hear when and where he will be awarded the BEM.

Speaker recalls her narrow wartime escapes

BARRY U3A's speaker this month rekindled memories for some - and an insight for others - of a child's life in World War Two.

Val Warlow lived in London during the Blitz, narrowly escaping injury when incendiary bombs landed on her home and on the Anderson Shelter where she and her family had taken refuge.

It was then decided that she should be evacuated to Canada with other children for the duration of the war.

At the last moment, her mother changed her mind and she stayed in London; the SS Benares carrying the children to Canada was torpedoed and of the 90 children on board 77 drowned.

After a spell as an evacuee in Staffordshire, she returned to London after

D Day and then encountered her final 'near miss' of the war.

V2 rockets were the first ballistic missiles - they weighed up to three tons and were launched into the stratosphere, dropping out of the sky at 3,000 miles an hour.

There was no warning siren - nothing until you heard the whine as it fell out of the sky and when it stopped, you knew it would drop and explode. One did just that, landing nearby, causing the land to explode around her.

There will be a very different subject at the next monthly meeting on Monday, February 3 at 2pm when Mike Wilcock will tell of '35 Years with C&A'.

Why not come and see what we are all about? There are different groups meeting throughout the month; all are welcome.

For further information, telephone John on 01446 413328.

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Make-over for Post Office in Penarth

THE Post Office is modernising its premises at 13 Glebe Street, Penarth, into a new 'main' style open-plan branch with longer opening hours for customers. It will open at 1pm on Monday, February 17.

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Send your local news and other items of interest to: gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk

VITAL LIFE SAVING LESSONS FOR HIGH STREET TRADERS



Peter Battle (president of Barry Rotary Club) and Bob Armstrong of Doctor Bob Balloons Unlimited are pictured with Jane Hutt AM.

TRADERS at High Street, Barry, were given a training session on how to use a defibrillator last week.

It was provided by Barry Community First Responders led by Bryan Foley. Many businesses took part with support from Barry Rotary Club.

The Vale AM, Jane Hutt, joined the session and commented: "This was an excellent example of business partnership and voluntary commitment, supported by Barry Community First responders and the Rotary Club, with High Street businesses undergoing vital training to help save lives."

Switch and cut energy costs

THE Cyd Cymru collective energy switching scheme for Wales has attracted 5,500 residents from across Wales, all keen to cut their energy bills, the Vale Council reported.

The scheme is a partnership between the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff councils, and the Energy Savings Trust. It aims to help people cut their energy bills, by negotiating as a group with energy companies to get the best rates possible for gas and electricity.

Coun Rob Curtis, Vale council cabinet member for the environment and visible services, said: "We hope this scheme will help the many families

struggling to pay their fuel bills.

"What is driving this initiative is the desire to help people gain fairness, stability and better value as energy prices continue to rise. I'm told that people could save between £87 and £239, depending on how they pay for their fuel."

The first 'switch' has closed, but there will be a second chance to switch, with registrations open from January 27. The scheme is open to everyone in Wales, regardless of property type or income, and it is free to sign up with no obligation to switch. Call 0800 0935902 or visit www.cyd-cymru-energy.com for more information.

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Owner of lame horse yet to be identified

RSPCA Cymru is appealing for information about a young female horse found on a common at Pantypwllau in Coity, Bridgend on January 8.

The tri-coloured mare was struggling to walk because all four of her hooves were badly overgrown and split.

Enquiries were made with people who graze their horses at the site and the local horse warden, but the owner is yet to be identified.

The horse has now been removed and treated by a vet, while enquiries into who owns her are continuing.

Inspector Nic De Celis said: "The horse's hooves were in a horrendous state, and she was struggling to walk."

"Although she was with some other horses on the common, no-one has claimed ownership, or seems to have any idea of where she came from."

"As she is not microchipped, we have no way of tracing an owner. Oddly, she was wearing a rug, which suggests that someone does own her, or has at least cared for her recently."

"We are keen to hear

from anyone who thinks they may know this horse or where she has come from".

Anyone who has information about this incident is asked to contact the information line on 0300 123 8018, where they can leave a message for Inspector De Celis. All calls will be treated in confidence.

To support the RSPCA, you can give £3 now by texting HELP to 78866 (text costs £3, plus one standard network rate message).



ABOVE: The horse was suffering from overgrown and split hooves.

Library offers 'home borrowing' service

VALE of Glamorgan Libraries has a team of volunteers who visit people in their homes, bringing a specially selected bag of books once a month, and stopping for a chat.

Community outreach officer, Andrea Griffiths, said: "We have volunteers based at most of our libraries, visiting readers in all parts of the Vale, but we know there are many more people out there who would like to take advantage of the Home Library Service, but don't know of its existence."

Home borrowers are often referred by concerned family and friends who live far away, or by neighbours, church members and health workers. Before matching up home borrowers with

their volunteers, Andrea visits each one individually to discuss their needs and reading or listening tastes.

She explained: "Home borrowers have to satisfy certain criteria, such as living alone or with someone who also has mobility problems, or they have no regular visitor, family member or friend who can choose books for them."

"Once it has been ascertained that they are eligible for the service, they can look forward to regular visits from a friendly, sympathetic volunteer."

Home borrowing volunteers are needed for the Llantwit Major, Dinas Powys and Cowbridge areas.

For more information, contact Andrea Griffiths on 01446 725381 or email ADGriffiths@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk to arrange a house visit.

Get fit and lose weight for a charitable cause!

REPORT by TIM CHAPMAN

A man from Bridgend, who is the driving force behind the River Africa charity, is encouraging people to support it by getting fit and losing weight.

Daniel Nadzo (42) is well known in Bridgend and the Vale for his fund-raising initiatives for a cause that is committed to constructing a 'mother and baby' hospital in Zimbabwe and a wider health provision in the country.

He said: "At the moment in the UK, we are suffering from an obesity epidemic. There are a lot of health benefits in running and I hope people will get involved in sponsored runs, lose weight and

raise funds for a worthwhile cause.

"We want to reduce the unnecessary and preventable deaths of mothers and infants in Zimbabwe."

"If people want more information, all they have to do is go to the website www.teamriver-africa.org

"Keeping fit can help people with a whole range of health problems such as diabetes, heart issues, bone fragility and Alzheimer's."

Daniel completed a half marathon in Conwy in November, and knows what it is like to prepare from scratch:

"At the beginning of October, I was struggling to run for longer than four minutes. The next day I built it up to eight minutes. Gradually, I was able to increase



the time I ran, until I was up to two hours."

"Those who get involved will get back-up and support from the charity. If people go online, there is a download form to register."

Daniel has a busy year of fundraising ahead of him.

In March he will climb Mount Kilimanjaro and in April, he plans to run a marathon in Paris.

JOB SEEKERS' WORKSHOP

THE Vale Council-led Barry Communities First, in partnership with Vale Adult and Community Learning, are running free fortnightly CV workshops at Barry Library to help job seekers create their own CV.

The next workshop is from at 9.30am-1pm, on Tuesday, February 4, and attendees must have a basic knowledge of how to use a computer.

Call 01446 709432 or visit www.BarryCommunitiesFirst.org for full details.

PACT meetings

GIBBONSDOWN PACT, Gibbonsdown Residents' Board Office, Coychurch Rise on February 4 at 10.30am.

Coffee and chat PACT meeting, Village Hall, Ystradowen, on February 4 at 11am.

CASTLELAND PACT, Civic Offices, Holton Road, on February 17 at 7pm.

LLANTWIT PACT, Leisure Centre on February 12 at 7pm.

LLANDOUGH PACT, Royal British Legion, Penlan Road, Llandough, on February 17 at 7pm.



is there room for the children of Wales in your will?

Who would you turn to if you were told your son or daughter was expected to die in childhood?

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If you'd like more information before you decide, we're here to help.

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www.tyhafan.org/gift-in-a-will

02920 532 265

legacy@tyhafan.org



How lessons from the past can create safer, better future

THE message of the Holocaust Memorial Day Event at Art Central in Barry this week was 'Learning lessons from the past to create a safer, better future'.

The Hineni Exhibition of Life Portraits and Memories helps us remember and understand this message.

We were reminded by our speakers, Colin Hayman, Glenn Jordan and Coun Neil Moore of the commitment we have made to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi persecution and the subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Dufur. This powerful exhibition is at Art Central until February 8.

Last week, I spoke at the EU Commission Office in Wales of the importance of 2014 for the citizens of Europe, with the anniversaries of two of the 20th Century's greatest conflicts – the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I and the 75th anniversary of the start of World War II.

I said that commemoration and Remembrance will be at the forefronts of our minds during these anniversaries, as it was on Holocaust Memorial Day.

I also said that I hope the contribution the European Union has undoubtedly made to building co-operation and peace within Europe, will be recognised in 2014.

The European elections in May will provide the opportunity for citizens of Europe to play their part in the democratic process, in a balanced and honest debate on the EU, and it is

important that we have that debate here in Wales.

It has always been my view that the EU is essential to the future success of both Wales and the UK, but it is clear that we need to provide the evidence to back this up and get the message across effectively, allowing for as much scrutiny and debate as we can encourage.

Centre award

I RECENTLY visited Cardiff University's Geo-environmental Research Centre with the UK Government's Europe Minister, David Lidington MP, where we congratulated the centre on being awarded a Queen's Anniversary Prize for higher and further education.

The centre's £10m EU-backed SEREN project is undertaking pioneering work into ground energy and has already assisted 38 businesses.

During the visit, I commented that this was an example of how Wales benefits from EU funds, which are helping to drive our knowledge economy, helping to secure our global competitiveness, and boosting economic growth and jobs in Wales.

EU funding

THIS week, we published the latest evidence of the benefits of EU funding across Wales. The information relating to the Vale, which is not a major beneficiary of EU funds, was very positive.

With 164 businesses assisted with EU funds, 230 businesses created and 502 gross jobs created in the county to date from the current programme, this investment is a positive outcome.

The beneficiaries from the European Social Fund (ESF)

include 5,789 participants with 853 entering employment and 2,132 gaining qualifications.

On February 11, I will be welcoming EU Commissioner Andor (who is responsible for the European Social Fund) to Cardiff, and I will be introducing him to some of the beneficiaries of ESF, including those who have taken part in our Jobs Growth Wales scheme to help increase youth employment in Wales.

This Welsh Government-funded scheme, backed by ESF, has already created 10,600 job opportunities – with 8,350 young people filling these jobs.

The Director General of the CBI has recently reminded us of the importance of the single European Market to our economic future. He says: "Being part of the EU has helped to make the UK one of the leading locations for investment, in part because of our direct access to a market of more than 500 million people and an EU economy with a GDP of \$16 trillion (£9.75 trillion)."

When Commissioner Andor comes to Wales, he will also visit a successful business, GE Aviation, which has received ESF support through the Welsh Government's £114m Skills Growth Wales Project, with engineering and business administration apprentices benefiting.

As we move forward out of difficult global economic times, with ongoing financial budget pressures, EU membership and EU funds have delivered and will continue to deliver, significant benefits for Wales.

Assembly Notes



by Vale AM
JANE HUTT
(Minister for Finance)

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The FoE opposes 'greater Cardiff'

THE next meeting of Barry and Vale Friends of the Earth will be at 7.30pm on February 4, in the Castle Hotel, Jewel Street, Barry.

The group are concerned that the rural and coastal character of the Vale would be lost in a 'greater Cardiff', if the councils were to be reorganised.

More green fields would disappear to feed the city, while regeneration funds, as we have all seen recently, will leave out Barry and other urban areas in the Vale.

Every town and village in the Vale is threatened with more housing, and no infrastructure improvements – as we have seen at White Farm and Wenvoe.

The councils need to work together to preserve the unique characteristics of the Vale and the city.

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Vale Council Leader responds to Tory challenge on merger

THE Conservatives are promising strong opposition to any plan to merge two local authorities, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, writes PHILIP IRWIN.

The plan was announced in the recently-published Williams Commission, and both the Welsh Conservative Leader, Andrew RT Davies AM, and Conservative councillors in the Vale have vowed to oppose it.

The councillors believe that the proposal will lead to the Vale being swallowed by a new 'Greater Cardiff' region – with disastrous consequences.

St Athan councillor and Conservative group leader, Coun John Thomas, said: "While some local authorities may be too small and fail to deliver satisfactory public services, this is not the case with the Vale Council.

"It is of sufficient size and scale and it delivers excellent services that are the envy of much larger local authorities,

including Cardiff. If the Vale was to become part of 'Greater Cardiff' there would be a great deal more residential housing development throughout the Vale.

"I also worry that investment in highways, schools and social service infrastructure would suffer, as well as other council facilities. I remember only too well the days of the 'Old South Glamorgan County Council' when hardly any money was invested in the Vale as it was all spent in Cardiff.

"Barry would be largely irrelevant, Penarth would become a mere suburb of Cardiff, and the 'Rural Vale' would be completely ignored.

"Councillors, and more importantly, 'council money' would be focused on Cardiff and not the Vale, as Cardiff councillors would hugely outnumber Vale Councillors."

The Conservatives called on the Vale Council Leader, Coun Neil Moore, to make his position clear, and Coun Moore was rapid with his response.

He said: "Where on earth have the Conservatives been for the last week? I have made it perfectly clear that I do not accept that a merger with Cardiff would be in the interest of the people of the Vale.

"I have issued a press release on it, which was copied to all staff in the Vale and all councillors, including all Conservative members.

"I took part in a live BBC Wales radio phone-in on Tuesday morning, following the publication of the report the day before on January 20. I have also been interviewed by Bro Radio and BBC TV and made my views perfectly clear.

"I have also had a meeting with all the group leaders on the Vale Council, including John Thomas, leader of the Conservatives, when I thought it had been agreed that no-one was in favour of the Williams recommendations.

"The fact that the Conservative group has been silent is the real issue here. They have continually tried to do down the council and have done a disservice to

the council and its staff. "Instead, perhaps they should agree with me that the Vale Council is a viable and progressive council and should remain as a stand-alone council.

"The Conservatives should also be reminded about the latest Wales Audit Report that confirmed that the Vale had appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness."

"I will again confirm

that I do not agree with the recommendations and I consider them to be neither reasonable nor justifiable. I am, therefore, keen to stress that if these recommendations are agreed by Welsh Government, it will have a severe impact on the community, not least in terms of jobs; the cost of reorganisation and service disruption caused as a result.

"I cannot understand why a full scale structural reorganisation is nec-

essary, affordable or required at this time."

Andrew RT Davies took a different tack, saying that any local government reorganisation could call into question existing Local Development Plans (LDPs) – creating further uncertainty and at great cost to the taxpayer.

Mr Davies said: "Vale residents have been through enough uncertainty, and a lot of public money has been spent on the various stages of put-

ting together an LDP for the area.

"Now, pretty much out of the blue, we learn that the Welsh Government is considering abolishing the Vale Council altogether, which will have a transformational impact on local planning."

Mr Davies also questioned whether the First Minister had a democratic mandate to enforce such a move, with local government reorganisation not having featured in Labour's 2011 mani-

festo for the National Assembly.

He said: "Carwyn Jones, it should be noted, made no reference to these plans to restructure local government in Labour's 2011 Assembly manifesto and has no democratic mandate to do so.

"Welsh Conservatives will closely monitor any proposals that Welsh Labour bring forward to ensure that small authorities retain a strong voice in local government."



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ADVERTISING FEATURE

Soap operas may give dangerous impression to landlords and tenants

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This is something that Catherine Hartland of Newbolds finds very concerning: "I watched a soap opera recently

where a landlord told a family with children that he needed to evict them, so he could move back into the property. The family moved out and were made homeless.

"I believe many people watch television programmes believing them to be factual. I am concerned that landlords may believe they, too, can evict tenants without a court order but this is unlawful.

"The tenant may have the right to seek compensation from the landlord for thousands of pounds."

Catherine explains: "If a landlord lawfully evicts a tenant by obtaining a court order the tenant may not seek compensation. I have seen landlords financially ruin themselves by unlawfully evicting tenants, changing locks and moving other tenants in."

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OBITUARY: ROBERT THOMAS, Cowbridge A well-known local auctioneer and former point-to-point rider

WELSH hunt-racing is mourning the death of well-known Cowbridge auctioneer and former point-to-point rider, Robert Thomas, who has died after a long illness bravely borne.

A stalwart of the Glamorgan Hunt, Mr Thomas rode in the 1950s, and his maroon and yellow colours were carried in point-to-points by horses such as *Kilbraes*, *Drake II* and *D.A.C.* St Athan farmer, Jim Thomas, grandfather of point-to-point riders Tom and Evan David, who rode against him on many occasions, said:

"Robert, being an auctioneer, was a well known personality in the Vale of Glamorgan. He was a likeable and quiet sort of man and was a good sportsman."

Legendary Welsh point-to-point rider, and Cowbridge farmer, John Llewellyn, said: "He was a real gentleman and it was a honour to ride for him. One horse of his I particularly remember winning on was *Tartelle*, which was some years ago now."

"He once told me that there was nothing more exciting in life than riding in a point-to-point."

In the past, Mr Thomas, who was 83, was the official judge at the Glamorgan Hunt

point-to-point. He owned a number of point-to-pointers after giving up race riding – the last of them being *Micks Prospect*, which won three of its four races during the 2009 season when trained by Aberthin's Abbi Vaughan.

On a personal note, I always found him to be friendly chap who always had a kindly word to say when we came across one another at the races.

He is survived by his wife Enid, daughters Kay and Sally and son Andrew.

The funeral took place at Ramoth United Free Church, Cowbridge, on Tuesday (January 28).

BRIAN LEE

'THANK YOU FOR GEM DONATION'

THANK you so much for your fantastic donation of £100 which was collected through The GEM's recent advertisement feature.

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Find out how you can get involved and support us in your area by contacting your local NSPCC fundraising office: NSPCC, Diane Engelhardt House, Treglown Court, Dowlais Road, Cardiff, CF24 5LW.

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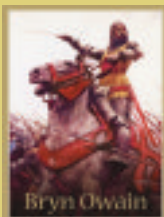


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A new Inn is set to open in Stalling Down after a month-long closure for refurbishment.

The Bryn Owain, formerly Loch Fyne Sea Food Restaurant, named in homage to the area's rich history and the victory of Owain Glyndwr at the battle of Stalling Down, is part of Greene King's popular Inns division.

Customers to the Bryn Owain will be welcomed by familiar faces as the original team has transferred across and the excellent standards previously enjoyed at the restaurant will remain unchanged. Manager Gavin Lewis said: "We are really excited to be open again following our transformation into an Inn. It is a brand new chapter for us and we are confident the new look and menu will prove popular."

All areas of the Inn have been upgraded, including new comfortable furnishings and modern décor, with some changes to the layout. The Bryn Owain will serve good quality pub food, with great offers such as two meals for £9.99, which is available all day every day. The menu offers a wide variety for customers to choose from, from classic award-winning fish and chips to vegetable and cashew nut paella or slow-cooked lamb shank and other great fish dishes.



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Williams Review: 'merger' blueprint flawed

THIS is my first column of the year, so welcome to 2014 – which looks to be interesting in many different ways.

We continue to work with lawyers from Welsh Government, the council and the Barry Waterfront Consortium to finalise legal agreements to enable the road to the Island to begin. Alongside that, we have a considerable regeneration scheme at the Eastern Promenade on Barry Island.

Welsh Government Ministers have visited the Vale to see the regeneration prospects for the area and we will continue to have as much dialogue as possible with the Welsh Government over many other issues.

Rural bus service

WE have launched a new Greenlinks bus service operating between Llantwit Major and Bridgend via Cowbridge. This demand-led service will operate from 8.15am to 6.15pm and will also serve many of the villages in the rural Vale.

The initial results are looking very promising and we hope that this will be a success. If you require information, or wish to request this service, please check the council's website, or telephone 0800 2941113. Users will need to book the bus by 12 noon the day before travel and regular passengers can also block book.

We will be working closely with the Welsh Government to provide further buses in the Vale to replace those services that have been withdrawn by the bus operators and the Vale cabinet have recently proposed plans to get funding for additional or alter-

native public transport through legal agreements with developers, as part of any planning consent approved.

New schools in the Vale

WE continue to extend and build new schools throughout the Vale and currently there are several consultations taking place and we look forward to continuing our commitment in the future.

The Vale has also had good news in relation to having Assisted Area Status confirmed for parts of the Western Vale, which includes the airport and Enterprise Zone.

In addition, we understand that the Vale could be included in the new Rural Development Plan and we look forward to being able to continue the work in the rural Vale started under the Creative Rural Communities development schemes.

Report disappointing

AS you might imagine, I consider that the Vale Council is a viable and progressive council and this has been illustrated in the latest Wales Audit Report that confirmed that the Vale had appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Auditor also issued a certificate confirming that the audit of accounts had been completed satisfactorily. I was, therefore, disappointed (to say the least) that the recommendation of the recently published 'Williams Commission' Review into Public Services Governance has suggested that we merge with Cardiff Council.

Although these are just recommendations, I consider them to be unreasonable or unjustifiable, other than for a line drawn on a map.

VIEW FROM THE VALE



by Coun
**NEIL
MOORE**
Leader of the
Vale of
Glamorgan
Council

I consider the recommendation to merge the Vale and Cardiff to be flawed and I am, therefore, keen to stress that if this is agreed by Welsh Government, it will have a severe impact on the community, not least in terms of jobs, the cost of reorganisation and service disruption caused as a result.

I understood that the Commission was supposed to look at ALL public services, whereas it seems to have mainly concentrated on the reorganisation of local government.

Under the current economic climate, I cannot understand why a full scale structural reorganisation is necessary, affordable, or required at this time.

I recognise that opinions within local government across Wales will vary and there may be pressure for change, particularly where the austerity measures may challenge the sustainability of certain councils.

I would reiterate that this is certainly not the case

in the Vale. I await with interest the formal response from Welsh Government and I will be eager to hear if the Welsh Government will allow other options to be considered, should we in the Vale need to progress any changes at all.

We live in a time of unprecedented cuts in public spending but we also know that demands on public services have never been greater.

The Welsh Government must be clear whether a reorganisation will assist in alleviating these pressures or exacerbate them, and we can ill afford the loss of a large number of good quality jobs.

We must proceed carefully and consider the options proposed by the Williams Review. Any change must be firmly based on a robust cost benefit analysis and precise identification of the upfront resources required to pay for large scale change.

There will need to be clarity on timescales, transitional arrangements, service and workforce implications and, above all, how the massive and substantial costs of any changes are to be met.

Whatever happens, I and my colleagues from all political and independent groups in the Vale will work constructively with the Welsh Government in shaping the future of Wales' public services.

However, it is important to remember that the council is a major local employer, delivering services that enable individuals to lead healthy and fulfilled lives within sustainable communities.

We have to ensure that we achieve the best for our communities, and the Williams Commission's proposals may not necessarily be the right way forward in its entirety.

I look forward to a full debate on these issues in the coming months.

'WE'RE KEEPING A CLOSE EYE ON CARDIFF AIRPORT', TORY LEADER

THE Leader of the Welsh Conservatives has said that they will be closely watching developments at Cardiff Airport.

Regional AM Andrew RT Davies had this to say about the announcement by P&O of a new route at Cardiff Airport.

"Any new routes are good news for the airport. However, it must be noted that this is a strictly limited one-off arrangement with P&O for just four flights.

"What we want to see is a concerted effort by the Welsh Government and the airport's management to attract regular international flights to a range of

destinations.

"The Welsh Government will have to go a long way to live up to the promises they made in paying £52 million of taxpayers' money for the airport and, whilst these announcements are clearly welcome, they will not make the airport sustainable."

'No benefits for the Vale from merger with Cardiff'

A LONG-serving Penarth councillor has cast doubt on prospects for the Vale, should a proposed merger with Cardiff go ahead.

Coun Anthony Ernest, who represented the Vale for over 30 years, and is a former chairman of the local authority, said there were "no conceivable benefits" and a merger "would simply take us back to the days of South Glamorgan County Council, which was totally dominated by the Welsh capital."

It had resulted in "minimal spend in the Vale, especially the rural areas, whilst the larger towns received little of merit that anyone can recall."

He went on: "The only item within the Williams Report – that is very lengthy – with

which I agree, is the proposal for closer co-operation between the Wales Ambulance Trust and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

"To co-locate ambulances at fire stations is logical and will ensure much better response times.

"All in all, the Williams Report is a 'fudge', which gives no benefits to Vale residents. It deprives them of local accountability in any meaningful way, would deprive the Vale of a level of council services – of which most people are very supportive, irrespective of administration – and impose a one-size-fits-all approach to how we might be governed in the future."

'Councillor must answer questions'

It was pleasing to see Coun Elmore setting out the 'facts' in relation to the report concerning school closures (GEM letters, last week).

Perhaps he could further assist on some other 'facts': Did he attend the meetings with the individual school representatives when they were told of closure of their schools?

If he did so, why did

LETTER

he not tell them that he was opposed to closure, thus giving them the impression that it was his policy?

Also, how much input did officers of the education department have in the scrutiny process, and was he aware that his officers were involved?

Hopefully, he can provide these 'facts'.
Gordon Kemp,
Llancaiach.



Gemma and her mum's haircuts raise £1,761 cash for Macmillan!

GEM readers may remember our story just before Christmas, when mother and daughter Caroline and Gemma Chester visited Cowbridge hairdressers Fich and Ramous for two rather radical haircuts.

Nine-year-old Gemma, a pupil at Llangan Primary School, had her long, long hair trimmed, while mum Caroline took drastic action and had the military cut (above).

It was all in aid of two good causes, as their hair went to the Little Princess Trust, which makes wigs for young girls receiving chemotherapy.

The second good cause was Macmillan Cancer Care, and it was here that the response from friends and family, and GEM readers, has raised a brilliant £1,761!

Congratulations to Gemma and her Mum!

Barry girl wins UK fitness title

FORMER Bryn Hafren pupil, Helen Tite (McTavish) daughter of John and Chris McTavish of Highlight Park, who now runs a health club in Falmouth employing 13 staff, has won the coveted 2013 UK National Fitness Awards Gym Team of The Year.

The exercise therapist and personal trainer has devoted much of her time to working with patients with long-term conditions, cancer, heart disease and neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's and Multiple Sclerosis.

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Dwynwen-O-Gram for school clerk Jean

A SCHOOL clerk from Cogan Nursery School received a "lovely surprise" recently, to celebrate Saint Dwynwen's Day, which is often referred to as the 'Welsh Valentine's day' and which falls on January 25 each year.

The staff and children at the school nominated Jean Shafto to receive a special 'Dwynwen-o-gram' - which was being presented to worthy winners who are loved and appreciated across Wales.

The school nominated Menter Bro Morgannwg, who promote the social use of the Welsh language in the Vale.

Mrs Shafto appeared emotional as all the children sang her songs and thanked her for all her hard work at the school.

Capturing the event was a camera crew from S4C, who filmed the surprise for the TV show *Prynhawn Da*, which was broadcast on the same day.

Mrs Shafto, on receiving the 'Dwynwen-o-Gram', struggled to hold



Jane Shafto pictured receiving her 'Dwynwen o Gram'.

back the tears and explained: "I am delighted, but can't believe it! I am just gobsmacked - thank you all so much."

Peter Thomas, a teacher at the school, nominated Jean and explained: "Choosing her to be nominated for this surprise was easy. Jean is a very special person who is loved by all of the staff and children at Cogan Nursery School."

"Very often in schools it is the teachers and support staff who get the most attention and all of the praise; however we wanted to show Jean how much she is loved and appreciated."

Pauline Rowland co-ordinated the 'top secret' mission.

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Out and About with The GEM

Llewyn Davis sings a beguiling tune for the Coen brothers

A MORE idiosyncratic pair of filmmakers you won't find than the Coen brothers, whose unique outlook has seen them create some of the finest films of the last 30 years, flitting from genre to genre but never dipping in quality.

Their latest film, *Inside Llewyn Davis*, is set in the 1960s folk scene and tells the story of the titular character (played by Oscar Isaac) as he tries to carve out a burgeoning music career. However, other people, and a maddening cat, soon get in the way of Davis' dreams...

A Coen brothers film

is never a straightforward proposition, the pair making films that aren't afraid of posing questions without the need for an answer, and can often flit between genres with a wonderful subtlety.

The brothers are noted for the lack of warmth in their films, their work bristling with cold characters and colder situations, and while *Inside Llewyn Davis* takes place during a freezing winter, it is surprisingly perhaps their most warm and tender film yet.

In *Llewyn* they have their typical protagonist, self-absorbed and always grasping defeat from the jaws of victory (most beautifully summed up in the closing scene), yet there is a hint more warmth in the character than they usu-



by GARETH JAMIESON
Follow Screen Talk on Twitter - @GEMScreenTalk

the characters more straightforward (John Goodman's jazz musician's peculiar behaviour explained away in an unexpected manner), and the humour warmer and less dark.

That said, at the centre of the film, the significance of the cat and his relationship with Llewyn can be added to the hat in *Miller's Crossing*, or the tornado at the end of *A Serious Man* (to name but two) - a story element that could mean nothing or everything? Laced with symbolism or just another plot point? It certainly adds a layer of intrigue to proceedings.

Visually, using cinematographer Bruno Delbonnel rather than Roger Deakins (their usual choice) gives the film a look that differs from the way they normally shoot; the film plays out in a hue of soft light, looking undoubtedly stylish, while the visual tricks are kept to a minimum.

If you've so far been unmoved or unwilling to let the Coen brothers' work into your life, then *Inside Llewyn Davis* may not be for you. The hallmarks of their work, however muted, are on show here - but there is much to relish in this wonderful piece of work.

VERDICT: A superb film that lingers long afterwards, *Inside Llewyn Davis* shows a hint of tenderness to the Coen brothers, the film their most touching yet (though that isn't saying much!). With Oscar Isaac delivering a glorious central performance, and a superb soundtrack, there is much to love about this beguiling effort. *Highly recommended.*

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000), *Crazy Heart* (2009).

In some ways, *Inside Llewyn Davis* is the brothers' most 'non-Coen-esque' work since *Intolerable Cruelty*; the kindness levels, while admittedly still prevalent, are dialled down.

Sport Relief mile on Island!

ON Sunday, March 23, Sainsbury's Sport Relief Mile will set off on Barry Island at 11am, with a choice of one, three or six miles.

"Enter now at sportrelief.com, get sponsored and help transform the lives of people living here in the UK and in some of the world's poorest countries, while being part of an incredible nationwide event," urges Vale Council events officer, Sarah Jones.

To enter the Barry Island Mile, visit sportrelief.com.

PDSA store needs help

A PENARTH charity store is appealing for animal lovers to volunteer their time to help raise funds for sick and injured pets.

PDSA is looking for new team members to help run its busy charity store on Windsor Road, and assistant manager, Christopher Murphy, said: "A volunteer in our store will get to meet new people and add some valuable skills and experience to their CV."

"They will also be helping to raise funds for local pets in need. We are looking for people who are passionate about pets and can lend a hand, even if it's a few hours a week."

For more details about volunteering for PDSA, call the national volunteering centre on freephone 0800 854 194, or visit www.pdsa.org.uk/volunteering.

The Penarth PDSA store can be contacted on 029 2071 1128.

Familiar new face at Vale Show!

PLANS are already underway for this year's Vale of Glamorgan show at Fommon Castle on Wednesday, August 13.

The committee has welcomed world record-breaking giant vegetable grower Phillip Vowels as horticultural show manager, and he hopes to introduce new classes to the show, including giant vegetables.

He said he looks forward to welcoming new and past exhibitors to the show, and invites schools to be part of this great event by entering classes for flowers, vegetables and best school's children's garden.

Phillip is happy to help schools with seeds and any advice they might need.

For further information, contact horticultural secretary Gail Wintle, on 07976 935 223, or email gailvegshow@gmail.com

WHAT'S ON IN YOUR AREA

Jumble sale in Dinas Powys

THE 1st Dinas Powys Scout Group is holding a jumble sale at 1.30pm on Saturday, February 1, at the Scout Hall, Highwalls Road, Dinas Powys. Admission 50p.

Craft fair in Barry

ENFYS Craft Fairs hold their first craft fair of 2014 on February 1 at St Francis Millennium Hall, Park Road, Barry between 10am and 4pm.

There will be a range of gifts on sale and personalised cards.

The chosen charity for February is the Youth Cancer Trust which provides support and free therapeutic breaks for young people (aged 14 to 30) living with cancer. Come and find out information about this charity from Roger Carey, who will be travelling to Barry from Llanelli.

For further information call 01446 418695.

Toy and train sale

BARRY Leisure Centre in Greenwood Street is hosting the next toy and train sale on Sunday, February 2, between 10.30am and 3pm, the first event of this type at this venue in 2014.

A sister event, Cardiff Toy and Train Sale, will be taking place at Penarth Leisure Centre on a three-monthly basis (the next show there is the Easter Special on April 19).

Telephone 01643 702757 and 07966 694579, website: www.chrisdyerfairs.co.uk

Penarth fair

PENARTH fundraising committee for Cancer Research UK start another fundraising year on Saturday, February 8, with a spring fair in the Paget Rooms at 10.15am.

Cakes and savouries, preserves, parcels, white elephant, cards and wrapping paper.

Admission 50p. Shadows Club ON February 11,

Penarth Conservative Club, Stanwell Road (029 2030 9979) features The South Wales Shadows Club; play (use PA etc) or just to listen; 8pm, usually £3; all are welcome.

Hospice fun run
GEORGE THOMAS Hospice Care, which offers specialist palliative care to those with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses, will hold its annual 5K Fun Run on Sunday, March 9, at Bute Park, Cardiff. Only £10 to enter, and every runner gets a t-shirt, goody bag and medal.

To enter, call GTHC on 029 2052 4150 or see www.gthc.org.uk.

Valeways walks

ON Sunday, February 2 at 2.30pm, 'Dunes and Downs', starting at Portobello car park, Ogmore.

On Tuesday, February 4, at 10am, Hoffi Cerdded, Hoffi Coffi, starting at Coffee Cove, Barry Island.

Also on February 4 at 10.30am, the coffee shop strollers meet at Cosmeston Country Park outside the visitor centre.

On Wednesday, February 5, at 10.30am, the coffee shop strollers meet at Romilly Cafe,

Go to the website www.BarryCommunitiesFirst.org or contact Hazel on 07899 665806 for more information.

Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D811.

● £2,000: 745445.

● The rollover, which now stands at £4,000 was not won this week.

● £10: 2 0 3 0 0 3, 690747, 355497, 535494, 223608, 295934, 599947, 3 8 8 2 0 0, 3 3 6 3 4 8, 883530, 110396, 187585, 369776, 516299, 858065, 949657, 111710, 332171, 356260.

● £5: 535765, 514046, 624593, 637336, 428652, 162444, 884276, 758069, 702912, 626036, 141844, 474897, 102173, 465659,

Cold Knap, Barry.

On Thursday, February 6 at 10.30am, the coffee shop strollers meet at Rhose Railway Station car park.

Vale Wine Circle

THE Wine Circle has a new venue and will meet at the function room of the Boverton Castle pub.

The group meets on the first Tuesday of each month, commencing on February 4 at 7.30pm. The membership cost is £7 per year, but the first two meetings are free. Members can bring their own wine/refreshments and have use of the facilities at the Boverton Castle.

The group aims to organise events throughout the year and would be delighted to see new members in the coming year.

For more information call Roy Chappell on 01446 792139.

Help to quit smoking

BARRY Communities First is offering free weekly support sessions to help those who want to quit smoking.

The eight-week course with a qualified smoking advisor runs every Wednesday between 3.45pm and 4.45pm at the People Centre, 3 Dunlin Court, Barry.

Go to the website www.BarryCommunitiesFirst.org or contact Hazel on 07899 665806 for more information.

Ten Tenors sing for a tenner!

A CONCERT for Valentine's Day features ten Welsh tenors, including Wynne Evans, Rhys Meirion, Aled Hall, Alun Rhys Jenkins, Huw Llewelyn, Richard Allen, Joshua Owen Mills, Sam Furness and Will Halliwell who are aiming to raise the roof at St David's Hall, Cardiff.

Accompanists are

Caradog Williams and Jeff Howard; compere Frank Lincoln. Cor CF1, with their musical director, Eilir Owen Griffiths, will also take part.

Guests include sopranos Naomi Harvey, Nuccia Focile, Claire Hampton and Fiona Harrison.

Tickets from £10, available from the Box Office at St David's Hall on 02920 878444.

All proceeds will go towards the Welsh Hearts charity and its All Wales Defibrillator Appeal.

Welsh language play in Cowbridge

A NEW play by a local author has been translated into Welsh and will be performed in Cowbridge Market Theatre, 7.30pm on February 8.

The *Utah Bride* by Carmen Medway-Stephens has been adapted into Welsh by Sharon Morgan of Theatr 1.618, and will star Sharon Morgan and Gwawr Loader. It will be directed by Wyndham Price.

The play tells the story of a 16-year-old Welsh girl, Alice, who defies her Welsh Methodist upbringing and runs away to live the American dream and marry a Mormon missionary.

Four years later, she arrives home in the dead of night. During that night, there are revelations, confessions, and a healing takes place between mother and daughter.

The play explores the concept of home, the meaning of family and whether the grass is greener on other side?

The *Utah Bride* had its first showing in December 2011 and a tour in 2012. Now, it is embarking on a full bilingual tour.

The *Utah Bride* is supported by Arts Council Wales, the Sherman Cymru Literary Department, and Chapter Arts

Holocaust exhibition

ART CENTRAL at Barry Town Hall is hosting the HINENI exhibition to commemorate the Holocaust until Saturday, from 10am to 4pm.

"The public are invited to show their support and consider the multitude of journeys people have endured. HINENI, meaning 'Here I Am' in Hebrew offers an extraordinary insight into individual lives," a spokesperson said.

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Vale of Glamorgan Building Excellence Awards 2014



The Building Control Surveyors from the Building Control Group have nominated builders who have achieved high quality building work.

Criteria required:

- **Compliance with Building Regulations and energy efficiency**
- **Supplying and managing information (giving of notices and information relative to the work)**
- **Speed of fault rectification**
- **Site environment, safety and storage of materials (so as not to be detrimental to their use)**
- **Client/customer satisfaction**



BUILDERS and developers who use the building regulation service of the Vale of Glamorgan Council will be attending the 'Building Awards' dinner, organised through the Building Control Group of the Council.

The awards dinner will again, for the eleventh year in succession, be held at the Mount Sorrel Hotel, Barry on Friday January 31, 2014.

The nominations for the awards are provided by the Council's Building Control Surveyors who are responsible for the supervision of the projects as they progress on site, through to the completion of building work.

Cllr Fred Johnson, Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation at the Vale of Glamorgan Council, states: "This is the eleventh successive year of the 'Building Awards' and I have great pleasure in providing recognition to builders and developers who are determined to provide a high quality customer orientated service. The nominations go to show yet again that there are several excellent examples of high quality construction projects that have been undertaken within the Vale of Glamorgan."

"Ensuring that buildings are constructed in accordance with current building regulations requires a very high standard of workmanship, and the builders nominated this year have proven that they can meet this requirement. I hope we continue to build upon the success of last year's event, when one of our winners went forward to represent Wales and won the Best Extension Category at The National Awards, in London, in November."

Marcus Goldsworthy, Operational Manager for the Development and Building Control Group also states: "Building Regulations have a key role whenever you decide to make alterations, extend or construct new buildings. With recent changes to the planning process and the devolution of the Building Regulations to the Welsh Assembly; reducing carbon emissions and improving performance and energy efficiency is at the front of the development process. Everyone has a part to play in conserving energy and reducing carbon emissions, whether we are homeowners seeking to extend our homes or developers taking forward a major new scheme. Changing the way we construct buildings to make them more sustainable will be a big challenge for all involved in the industry".

The Development and Building Control Group falls within the Development Services Department of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, and its Head of Service, Rob Thomas stated: "Development of any size has a major impact on the day to day lives of persons who are undertaking building projects. Ultimately it is the builder who has the major responsibility in satisfying not only the customer's needs, but also of meeting the terms of the legislation. The 'Building Awards' will provide all those involved with well deserved recognition for consistently carrying out work of a high standard".

The Vale of Glamorgan Council would also like to thank all the sponsors of this event, without whom it would not be possible to recognise the builders and developers whose quality of work is making a positive difference to the environment of the Vale of Glamorgan.

Sponsors of the awards are: Nina Estate Agents from Barry, ACD Skip & Recycling from Bridgend, The Mount Sorrel Hotel, Greenbuild Consult and The Glamorgan GEM.

Winners of the Vale of Glamorgan event will go forward to the LABC South Wales 'Building Awards' dinner that will be held at the Vale of Glamorgan Golf & Spa Resort, Hensol, on April 25, 2014.

The ultimate achievement can be recognised at national level, where the winners of the All Wales event will be nominated into the LABC National Building Awards, which will include nominations from most of the local authorities throughout Wales and England, and will be held in London in November 2014.



The Vale of Glamorgan Building Control Awards are kindly sponsored by:



Vale of Glamorgan Building Excellence Awards 2014



Twyn Yr Odyn 1, Chapel Terrace

Proposal: **Single storey extension to rear**

Agent: **David Tonkinson from Dinas Powys**

Contractor: **Phil Webley c/o WW Building Services**

The scheme consisted of updating a small two bedroom terraced house in the village of Twyn yr Odyn.

The work consisted of the addition of a number of ground floor rooms including a bedroom, nursery and kitchen and updating the existing accommodation.

The excavation took weeks to dig as the ground was mainly rock, this had to be removed due to the ground contours of the existing garden in relation to the existing and proposed floor levels.

The work progressed quickly, with the builder liaising with Building Control throughout.

The accommodation provided has created a usable family home for the 21st century.



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Sully 7 Smithies Avenue

Proposal: **Two storey extension and complete renovation**

Agent: **Nigel Arnold from Penarth**

Applicant/Contractor: **Mr & Mrs Smith**

The scheme consisted of updating a post war bungalow that had been converted into a nursing home but never opened.

The work consisted of the removal of many of the internal walls, and the insertion of structural steelwork to open up the interior of the building.

The formation of a two storey lounge dining area with an obscure glazed roof has introduced light into the building and been added to by a feature staircase which serves the upper floor.



The ground floor also has a cinema/bar area for entertaining.

The first floor has been constructed using a bespoke timber frame system.

Also, at the first floor level, large windows have been provided to the master bedroom to give views of the coastline.

The work was carried out by local tradesmen and supervised by the owners and their architect in liaison with the Building Control officer.

The completed scheme has created a 'one-off' house to be admired.



Ystradowen A unique village home

Proposal: **New Dwelling**

Agent: **RR Architects from Pontyclun**

Contractor: **Westgate Building Services of Pontyclun**

This new property was erected to replace an old farm cottage, and provides a two storey dwelling, garage and detached pool building – all clad in locally sourced stonework.

As with many remote buildings, an new independent drainage treatment plant was installed.

The builder maintained adequate contact with Building Control throughout the build process, ensuring that the involvement continued at various stages. The team work on this project meant that the achievement was a dwelling of substantial quality.



The Vale of Glamorgan Building Control Awards are kindly sponsored by:



Vale of Glamorgan Building Excellence Awards 2014



Barry

Golwg y Coed

Land East of Pencoedre Lane

Proposal: **67 New Dwellings**

Applicant/Agent: **Taylor Wimpey South Wales Developments Limited**

Contractor: **Taylor Wimpey South Wales Developments Limited**

The development comprises of the construction of 67 houses, some of which were for housing association rental. This is the first site that Taylor Wimpey has used the Local Authority for its Building Control Service within the Vale Of Glamorgan area. The Building Control team have built up a very good relationship of trust and respect during the construction phase of this project.

Regular inspections were undertaken as required by the developer. The developer utilises the flexibility of the service which LABC gives, by inviting Building Control Officers to regular site meetings so that any issues which may arise are resolved at an early stage.

Despite the hectic nature of volume house building, this site always gave the impression of being organised and well run, with great attention paid to health and safety of site operatives and the public. Materials were stored in a clean and secure compound on site in an appropriate manner.

The site manager should gain special praise as he has been keen throughout this project to liaise with Building Control to ensure full compliance without the need to rectify matters later. This ensured a very smooth construction phase as no significant problems arose. It also enabled a fast and smooth completion of properties.



Dinas Powys

Rockside, Station Road

Proposal: **Extension**

Agent: **Christian LeGuilcher c/o LeGuilcher Architecture**

Applicant/Contractor: **Wayne Moore Construction**



The scheme consisted of updating a stone house in the village of Dinas Powys.

The work consisted of the addition of a ground floor playroom with a first floor guest bedroom and en-suite.

The excavation took weeks to dig as the ground was mainly rock.

A reinforced concrete retaining wall with appropriate tanking was installed to retain the driveway and adjacent roadway.

Once out of the ground the work progressed quickly with the builder liaising with Building Control throughout.

The accommodation provided has created a usable family home for the 21st century.



Wenvoe

The Old Rectory, St. Lythans Road

Proposal: **Extension**

Applicant/Contractor: **Mr Keith Glaister**

Agent: **Mr. Ray Baker**

The property was a former rectory in the village of St Lythans. The property consists of a detached farm house style building with panoramic views of the countryside.

The proposed extension was to provide a two storey extension to provide a ground floor swimming pool with first floor bedroom and lounge area.



The building has been built using local stone and hardwood doubled glazed units and a matching slate roof.

Due to good communication with Building Control and an agreed inspection regime, the project has resulted in a high quality build in keeping with the existing property while giving an interior with a 21st century feel.



The Vale of Glamorgan Building Control Awards are kindly sponsored by:



Vale of Glamorgan Building Excellence Awards 2014



Llantwit Major Dimlands Lodge

Proposal: **Extension**

Agent: **Alwyn Jones Architects**

Contractor:
Mr. Neil Smith & Co. Ltd



Submitted in a full plans format, this application proposed a two storey side extension to a unique stone 'listed building'.

The stone features of the existing dwelling were replicated within the extension, to include hand cut stone copings, corbelled turrets, labels and cills together with dressed stone quoin work.

Access within the extension leads to a balcony roof area, to provide uninterrupted views over the Heritage Coastline and Bristol Channel.

The logistics of the extension and the re-modelling of the existing dwelling tested the contractor to the full. Close contact with Building Control was maintained throughout the build process.

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We would like to thank all associated with the construction and development of the Grade II CADW Listed project at Dimlands Lodge.

Cowbridge Sutton Farm

Proposal:

Barn conversion to holiday lets

Agent: **Richard Crockett**

Contractor: **Dave Cooper c/o W. J. James & Sons, Fonmon**

This nomination submitted in full plans format relates to phase 1 of a three-part conversion of redundant stone farm buildings into holiday accommodation.

Only the external walls and roof structures of the barns were retained with the remainder of elements being renewed to modern standards of thermal efficiency to provide 2 holiday lets of substantial quality in a remote and tranquil setting.

W. J. James maintained close communication and a very high standard of workmanship throughout the build process.



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Llanblethian Brooklyn

Proposal:
Extension

Agent:
Anderson & Associates

Contractor:
JCW Developments

This application for a two storey extension was submitted in a full plans format. It involved several elements of construction with various complicated roof structures, providing an attached garage, atelier, garden room and first floor studio.

Limited vehicular access to the site presented many logistical problems to the builder, who coped admirably with the issues, to achieve a building of quality.



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Dinas Powys Woodland Rise, St. Andrews Road

Proposal: **Extension**
Agent: **Richard Crocket**
Contractor: **Gibbons Bros**

The scheme consisted of updating a brick built bungalow on the outskirts of the village of Dinas Powys.

The work consisted of the addition of a ground floor lounge and bathroom with a first floor bedroom and veranda.

Due to planning restrictions the extension has been built with angled walls to match the existing building.

The interior has been enhanced using new feature trusses in the roof structure and the veranda has an enclosed glass balcony overlooking the rear garden.

The builder, in liaison with Building Control, has created a well-constructed extension with some unusual details.

The building work is of a very high standard, which is to be expected from a previous award winner.



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Ty-Hir Farm, St. Brides, Wentlooge, Newport, South Wales NP10 8SF

Steve James Local Builder/ Craftsmanship

Proposal: **Extensions and alterations**

Address: **Various**

Applicant: **Various**

Agent: **Various**

Contractor: **Steve James c/o SJ Building & Property Maintenance Ltd**

A worthy inclusion in this year's awards, SJ Building & Property Maintenance have continuously demonstrated high levels of workmanship and quality on various projects throughout the year. With a reputation built on commitment, professionalism and achieving client satisfaction, SJ Building & Property Maintenance continue to carry out schemes of an exceptional standard that far exceeds the requirements outlined in current Building Regulations.

The contractors have maintained this high standard despite undertaking a substantial number of projects, throughout the Vale authority, that have each presented their own unique and unconventional problems. SJ Building & Property Maintenance, through their excellent work ethic and attitude, have demonstrated an unsurpassed level of care

and commitment to client needs and project requirements.

One of Steve's qualities is that he is not just interested in completing the work and moving on to the next contract; he is genuinely concerned that the finished product meets his own high standards and pleases his clients. Furthermore, he has had the flexibility to extend the remit of the work in response to developing ideas; when necessary, he has provided sound advice - both technical and aesthetic.

The contractor's willingness to ensure Building Regulations involvement at all key project stages has resulted in the development of an efficient and sound working relationship with the Building Control department. A nomination in this year's awards is a fitting reward for the effort and skill shown by SJ Building & Property Maintenance in 2013.



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Barry Merthyr Street

Proposal:
Social Housing - Three storey block of 12 flats

Applicant: **Newydd Housing Association**

Agent: **Davies Llewelyn & Jones**

Contractor: **Green Hill Construction**



davies llewelyn and jones
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E-Mail: daviesllewelyn@aol.com



Working in partnership with
Newydd Housing are pleased
to have been nominated for the
Vale of Glamorgan Building Award.

Special thanks to our Site Manager Gareth Hann
who was instrumental in handing over
a quality product on time & within budget.

01633 290159

This Social Housing Scheme consists
of the development of a three storey
block of 12 apartments.

Despite not having any previous
developments from Green Hill
Construction within the Vale of
Glamorgan, they impressively met all
the criteria with regards to Building
Regulations. The contractors ensured
Building Control were involved at all the
necessary stages of the project and
consistently discussed any issues or
key changes to obtain a smooth
transition on site.

The timber framed development was
carried out to a very high standard,
which was reflected in the achieved air
permeability tests.

The site location was within a built up
area, adjacent to the town centre and a
very busy narrow street. Green Hill
Construction made special
consideration to ensuring that the works
had minimal impact on local
residents. High standards of health and
safety, including cleanliness of site,
were maintained throughout.



> Newydd is proud to be working
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> Newydd is delighted that Crawshay
House, Merthyr Street in Barry has
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enquiries@newydd.co.uk

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Best LABC Partnership

With Newydd Housing
Association and Tony
King Architects also
working with Rhondda
Cynon Taff



This partnership was established in 2012. Since
this time, we have established a good working
relationship with both the Housing Association and
their agents.

Their projects have varied from house refurbish-
ments, to 'one-off' houses, to multi storey mixed
use developments consisting of ground floor shops
& offices with apartments over.

A method of working has been established with
preliminary enquiries used to give pre-application
advice.

Many of the schemes have been in adjacent
counties where existing joint working has been
established over many years, which has helped the

transfer of projects from the plans stage to site.

Since inception, this partnership has gone from
strength-to-strength, enabling the client to trust
more and more complicated schemes to be
developed.

The partnership started in a low key manner with
just a couple of units being developed with a value
of £200k, to the multi-million pound schemes with
up to 100 apartments with 8 shop units.

The partnership has allowed Newydd Housing
Association, in conjunction with Tony King
Architects, to expand their business plans and
allow them to provide more affordable homes and
other facilities to the local communities.



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THE Glamorgan GEM is proud to once again co-sponsor the eleventh annual Vale of Glamorgan Building Awards.

As the Vale's most widely-distributed weekly newspaper, we are committed to supporting the community as a whole, and local businesses in particular.

As such, it gives us genuine pleasure to publicly acknowledge their professional achievements – and what better way to do this than through these prestigious Vale of Glamorgan Council awards?

The nominees listed in this special supplement had to fight off formidable competition to get this far and they can be justifiably proud of themselves.

The GEM, too, is pleased to play its part in honouring this Vale success story.

Recognition must be given to Jan Irving, who has co-ordinated the awards supplement for The GEM for eleven years.

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The company is progressive, is open to any new waste reduction initiatives, and actively pursues new waste recycling ideas.

It continues to source waste streams to recycling end-users. Understanding the requirements of its customers, together with good service, remains a top priority.

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Councillor Margaret Wilkinson, the Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, is pleased to be associated with the Council's Building Control Group's eleventh 'Building Awards' and wishes every success to the nominees.



Mae'r Cynghorydd Margaret Wilkinson, Maer Cyngor Bro Morgannwg, yn falch o ymwneud â 'Gwobrau Adeiladu' Grŵp Rheoli Adeiladu'r Cyngor, a gynhelir eleni am yr unfed tro are ddeg, ac yn dymuno pob llwyddiant i'r rhai sydd wedi'u henwebu.

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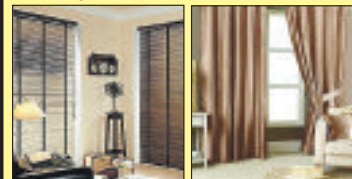
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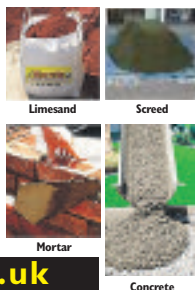
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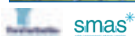
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PENARTH ENTHUSIAST BEN APPOINTED AS CHAIRMAN OF DEAN FOREST RAILWAY

A PENARTH man has been appointed chairman of a popular preserved railway.

Ben Gray has been a guard and worked on the line at the Dean Forest Railway at Lydney in Gloucestershire, 10 miles from the Welsh border.

The position is voluntary, and at the age of 30, he may have a claim to be the youngest chairman of a heritage railway in the country.

Mr Gray, who stood for the Conservatives at the last Assembly elections, said: "I got involved with the Dean Forest Railway because it is the closest to Penarth.

"Thirty is quite young to be

chairman of a heritage railway.

He first became interested in railways because his grandparents lived next to the 'Watercress Line' in Hampshire.

He added: "I was absolutely fascinated by it, and I first became a volunteer at the age of 12, working in the buffet."

The railway runs through four miles of the picturesque Forest of Dean between Lydney and Parkend.

The heritage railway has regular Thomas the Tank Engine days – the author of the original books, Rev Wilbert Awdry was a president of the railway – and one of its engines is named Wilbert in his honour.



Ben Gray of Penarth is the new chairman of the Dean Forest Railway in Gloucestershire.

ROTARY CLUB'S NEW RECRUIT!

THE Dinas Powys Rotary Club president, Tony Stevens, welcomed its new member Andrew Marsh last week.

A Sully resident and an ex-employee of British Gas in Cardiff, Andrew was introduced to the club by Rotarian Bill Christensen.

There was also a presentation by the district membership officer, Rotarian Keith Moger, who gave an interesting talk on the future of Rotary and its ideas and plans to attract new members.



PICTURED, left to right, are: president Tony Stevens, the new member Andrew Marsh, and Rotarian Bill Christensen.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF A POPULAR FAMILY BUSINESS

A & H Asprou are to celebrate on Holton Road with a Ty Hafan fundraiser



RECALLING A PROUD MOMENT!

ABOVE: Andreas celebrating his Welsh Cup win in 1970 with his daughter Nina.



Members of the Asprou family in 1960, with a prestigious British hairdressing title. Among those pictured are Andreas (far left) his brother John (centre with the Cup) and Andreas's uncle Chris far right.

Award-winning gents and boys' hairstylist, A & H Asprou of 241 Holton Road, is celebrating its 50th anniversary on February 7.

The business is the quintessential family concern – inspired by father Andreas and carried on by son Harry.

For any commercial enterprise to last for 50 years in the same location is a huge achievement – even more so in the competitive world of hairdressing.

Andreas told The GEM that he was originally encouraged to come to Barry from Cardiff by his brother, John.

"I was a very young fellow – about 19 – when I started the business. I didn't ever think about whether it would still be going in 50 years!

"I do remember being very

determined at the time and in 1970 I won a Welsh Cup in hairdressing, and things really took off."

So what does Andreas believe is the secret of A & H Asprou's success?

"Giving a great service and giving the public what they want."

That excellent service is demonstrated by the loyalty of its customers as Harry, who joined his father in 1985, explained: "People come from all over the Vale. We've got one customer, Fred O'Connell, who used to live in Cadoxton, moved to Gloucester, but still comes in for his hair cut."

"Another customer comes all the way from Cardigan once a month."

"We don't get much passing trade, so we rely on our good name. A good reputation is spread

by word of mouth and that's what has helped us."

The business employs three full time members of staff and Andreas is always on 'standby' if needed.

One major change over the years is that men have become more style-conscious.

Although, Andreas and Harry stress their success has been down to great service, there's something else they offer – boundless enthusiasm!

The shop has a friendly atmosphere with a real buzz and lots of laughter.

To celebrate their 50th anniversary, Andreas and Harry are holding a raffle in aid of the Ty Hafan children's charity. When they celebrated the 30th anniversary of the business, 20 years ago a fundraiser for Ty Hafan raised £1,246.

Here's to the next 50 years!



Andreas and Harry are celebrating 50 years of success for the Asprou family on Holton Road.

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Andria & Maria would like to congratulate Andreas & Harry on their 50th anniversary.

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Sounds of the 40s heard again in Barry!

COLD and wet January weather failed to dampen the enthusiasm of visitors to this year's first open day at the Glamorgan Wartime Heritage Centre at Barry Island, courtesy of the nostalgic sounds performed by visiting 40s entertainer Ricky Hunter.

Playing the hits of Glenn Miller and other performers that were popular during the 'friendly invasion' of Barry by American GIs, the Nottingham-based entertainer, whose family live nearby, brought live entertainment to the museum's open day.

A spokesman said: "Ricky is a popular entertainer on the 1940s circuit, and to show his support for what Barry at War group are doing, in promoting the wartime history of the area through our tiny museum and local exhibitions, he volunteered to come along and provide free live entertainment at our open day."

"He certainly proved popular with the visitors, many of whom travelled from England especially to hear Ricky play, and dance along to the sounds of Glenn Miller, Duke Ellington and other popular hits of the era."

"On a more educational theme, we also had an exhibition of the last century of British Army equipment, and many veterans told us stories of them wearing much of this. In contrast, and for the first time at the museum, we



Many visitors came dressed in 1940s clothing to hear and dance to Ricky Hunter.

were able to exhibit a collection of Second World War German equipment, which seemed particularly popular with our younger visitors, who had only seen this equipment on computer games like 'Call of Duty'.

"Along with the regular Wednesday afternoon openings, the next event at the Glamorgan Wartime Heritage Centre will be a military collectors' fair on February 9. Here collectors will be able to buy and sell all types of militaria, from medals and uniforms to replica weapons."

ADE PITMAN
Admission to the Glamorgan Wartime Heritage Centre is free, although a small admission fee will be charged for entry into the Militaria Fair. For more details, or to book a table, call 07930 874161 or see the website www.wartimeglamorgan.co.uk.

Ashgrove pupils help clear up after storms

SINCE Storm Hercules devastated our local coastline, pupils from Ashgrove Special School, Penarth have been regularly visiting local beaches to help clear the rubbish left behind.

Pupils have lost count of how many bags of marine litter they have collected and they are often very surprised by what they find.

One pupil said he had collected enough shoes to open his own shoe shop, while another was wondering where the tractor was that must have lost a wheel.

The pupils involved in beach cleans take part in an intervention called 'Coastal Connections' at Ashgrove School.

It offers pupils an alternative learning environment to the classroom and a focus upon health and well-being.

KB



Ashgrove pupils have been surprised at what they've found while clearing local beaches.

News from Penarth Computer Club A LITTLE BIT ABOUT BITS

WHEN Charles Babbage designed his difference engine – a clockwork computer in effect – he used the mathematics that people of the time would understand.

The numbering system used digits 0 to 9 and the machine was designed to cope with them.

This system is known as 'decimal' or to the base 10, ie after you get to 9 you revert to the figure 1 and add a zero to get 10. Then you increase the last digit until it gets to 9 and add 1 to the last-but-one digit and start again at zero for the last digit.

After 19 you get 20 and so on forever. The number 79 is therefore means 7 times the base of ten plus 9.

Various mechanical devices were invented over the years, but using ten digits was always cumbersome for mechanisms, not to mention the physical effort to wind the wheels in the calculators. Electricity now takes care of the work.

Alan Turing devised a machine to combine the speed of electricity with a simple mathematical system.

It was built in 1944 by Post Office engineer Tommy Flowers using 2,000 valves.

Electricity recognises only two states, Off and On (say 0 and 1). This matches mathematics to the base 2 (known as Binary).

Using the same example as above, the highest digit is 1.

To count forward you write the 1 and add a zero, getting 10. This gives a sequence as follows:

0 decimal = 0 binary
1 decimal = 1 binary
2 decimal = 10 binary
3 decimal = 11 binary
4 decimal = 100 binary

5 decimal = 101 binary and so on
150 decimal = 10010110

Long strings of 1's and 0's are difficult for us to recognise, but are ideal for a computer that can recognise only two states.

Each 1 or 0 is a Binary digit known as a 'bit'. It takes 8 bits to define a character such as 'a' or 'h'. The 8 bit combination is called a byte.

Although computers were needed to deal with numbers, home users will almost certainly spend more time using letters, sounds, colours and pictures.

With only two states for a bit, more bits must be used to supply information about all the qualities of each dot or Picture Element (Pixel) on the screen.

16-bit computers were able to show what was required on early computers. Sophistication brought about 24-bit machines then 32-bit machines.

We now have 64-bit computers that use transistors to display 64 million colours in our digital photographs and handle the massive disc drives that are now affordable for home users.

The increasing numbers of bits that have to be handled have been matched by the ability of the machines to handle them at ever-increasing speeds. And the information is stored in increasingly compact manner.

Our next meeting is on February 11, at All Saints Lesser Hall, Victoria Square, Penarth, 7.30pm for 8pm. A Question & Answer forum for all. Visitors always welcome. See penarthcomputerclub.co.uk.

HOWARD DESMOND

History society

RHOOSE and District History Society are holding another of their monthly meetings this Friday (January 31) at 7.30pm in the lesser hall of Rhose Community Hall, Stewart Road, Rhose.

Terry Rooney's topic will be 'Welsh Tramps and King Coal'. Admission at door £1 (adults); 50p child under 16.

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BARRY TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF Y BARRI

GRANTS FOR LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Applications are invited from local voluntary and not-for-profit organisations seeking financial assistance in 2014/15. Forms are available from Barry Town Council, 7 Gladstone Road, Barry, CF62 8NA. Telephone: (01446) 704920 info@barrytowncouncil.gov.uk

Your constitution and latest audited accounts must accompany the application. New organisations must submit a business plan/budget in place of audited accounts. All applications complying with the criteria will be considered. The submission of an application does not guarantee that a grant will be awarded.

The Council are unable to consider applications from or on behalf of National Organisations, unless they can demonstrate that their services will benefit a significant proportion of the local community.

Applications should be returned to the address given below by or before Friday, 7 March 2014

Mr C Lewis
Town Clerk
Council Offices
7 Gladstone Road
Barry
CF62 8NA



BARRY TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF Y BARRI

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Mae'n rhaid ichi gynnwys eich cyfansoddiad a'ch cyfrifon archwiliedig diweddaraf gyda'r cais. Rhaid i fudiadau newydd gyflwyno cynllun busnes/cyllideb yn lle cyfrifon archwiliedig. Bydd pob cais sy'n cydymffurfio â'r meini prawf yn cael eu hystyried. Nid yw cyflwyno cais yn golygu eich bod yn rhwym o dderbyn grant.

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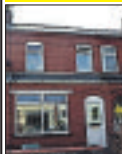
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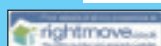
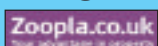
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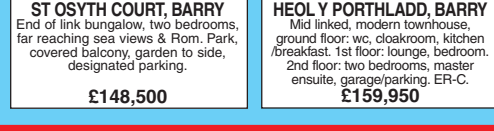
Mid terraced traditional, two reception rooms, ground floor bathroom, kitchen, three bedrooms, upvc - gc heating, no chain. ER-D.

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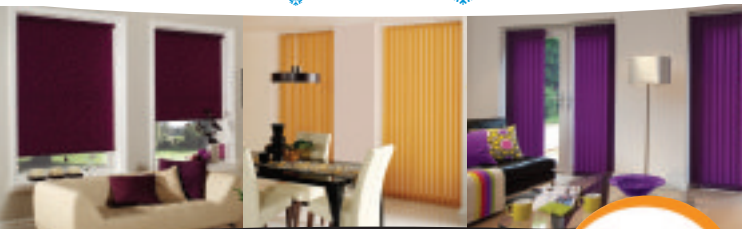
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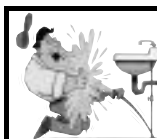
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Anniversary

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Resting in the private chapel of Thomas Brothers Funeral Service, Cowbridge until his service at Coychurch Crematorium, Bridgend on Friday, 7th February at 1.15pm. Family flowers only, donations may be made to Macmillan Cancer Support.

OWEN
Ken

Peacefully after a short illness, Ken of Llantwit Major, Pat's devoted husband.

Funeral service on Wednesday 5 February 2014 in St. Illtud's Church at 12 noon followed by cremation at Coychurch Crematorium at 1.15pm. Family flowers only, but donations may be made to St Illtud's Church c/o the Funeral Director (cheques only please). All enquiries to W.A. Brown & Son 01446 792489.

BOORMAN

Eric John

Gwen, Wendy, Kath and families would like to thank all those who attended Eric's funeral and for all the messages and support shown at this sad time.

Also many thanks for the donations to Ty Hafan, to Mr. J. W. James of Fonnnon Funeral Directors, John Durbin (Humanist Funeral Celebrant) and Bethel Baptist Chapel.

NEATHEY
Bryn

The family of the late Bryn wish to thank relatives, friends and neighbours for their kindness and support at this sad time.

For the many cards, letters of condolence, phone calls and donations to Marie Curie Hospice, Penarth and their attendance at St Peter's Church, Dinas Powys. A special thank you to the Reverend John Binny for his tribute to Bryn and to the Reverend Chris Seaton for a beautiful service. Thank you to Matthew Sims, Funeral Director, and all the staff of Green Willow Funerals for their excellent service.

OWEN

Margaret (nee Armitage)

Peacefully on Saturday 25th January 2014 at Holme Towers Hospice, Penarth. Margaret, beloved wife of Lyn, devoted mother of Susan and Nigel and dearly loved grandma of all her grandchildren and great grandchildren - will be greatly missed by all her family and friends.

Funeral service at Luchana Mission Church, Hillary Rise, Barry on Thursday, 6th February at 10am, followed by cremation at the Cardiff and Glamorgan Crematorium, Port Road, Barry at 11.15am. No flowers by request; if desired, donations in lieu to Marie Curie Cancer Care may be made during the retiring collection following the service. Funeral arrangements entrusted to Robert Johnson at Park Independent Funeral Directors, Barry.

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BLACKMAN
Jean

Jean Blackman formerly of Llantwit Major, died most peacefully at Parkside, Penarth on 22 January, just short of her 88th birthday. Loving wife of the late Denis Blackman, much loved mum of Howard and Steven and granny to Alice, Henry, Tim, Charlie and Clare. Funeral at Thornhill Crematorium on Monday, 3 February at 12.45pm.

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WILLIAMS
Colin David

Colin, much-loved father, grandfather and great grandfather, died peacefully at Barry Hospital on 26 January, aged 98. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Funeral at Coychurch Crematorium, Bridgend on Thursday, February 6th at 9.30am. Family flowers only please, but donations to Cancer Research Wales, c/o www.greenwillowfunerals.com (donations) or direct to the charity. All enquiries to Green Willow Funerals, 21a Station Road, Dinas Powys, CF64 4DE Tel: (029) 2051 4627.

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CYHOEDDUS 2013

Bydd y gorchymyn uchod, a wnaed ar 21 Tachwedd 2013, o dan Adran 119 o Ddeddf Prifffyrdd 1980, yn gwyro llywybr cyhoeddus Rhif 1 Y Wig o gyflinad A-B-C-D i gyflinad A-E-F-G-H-I-J-K-D fel y'i dangosir ar fap y gorchymyn.

Mae copi o'r gorchymyn a'r map wedi'i ddarparu, a cheirwch ei weld yn rhad ac am ddim yn Swyddfa'r Doc, Dociau'r Barr, Y Barr, CF63 4RT yn ystod oriau swyddfa arferol. Gwch brysio copiau o'r map a'r gorchymyn yn y fan honno am £4.50 yr un.

Dylech nodi eich sylwadau ac unrhyw wrthwynebiad sydd gennych i'r Gorchymyn, a'u hanfon at Gyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Datblygu Cyngor Bro Morgannwg, Swyddfa'r Doc, Dociau'r Barr, Y Barr, CF63 4RT erbyn 27 Chwefror 2014. Dylech hefyd nodi eich twymau dros eu cyflwyno.

Ga na ddar sylwadau neu wrthwynebiadau i law, mae os caiff y rhai a ddarbynydd eu tynnu'n ôl, bydd Cyngor Bro Morgannwg yn rheidd i gadarnhau bod y Gorchymyn yn ddilysweddol. Os caiff y Gorchymyn ei anfon at Weirddog Cymru ar gyfer ei gadarnhau, bydd y sylwadau a'r gorchymynauadau naa tynwyd yn ôl, yn cael eu hanfon a'r yr un pryd.

Dyddiedig 30 Ionawr 2014

Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Datblygu,
Swyddfa'r Doc, Dociau'r Barr, Y Barr, CF63 4RT

NOTICE OF MAKING OF AN
ORDER (OTHER THAN AN
ACQUISITION
EXTINGUISHMENT ORDER)
HIGHWAYS ACT 1980
THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL
PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO 1 WICK
PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION
ORDER 2013

The above order, made on the 21st day of November 2013, under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, will divert the Public Footpath No 1 Wick from the alignment A-B-C-D to the alignment A-E-F-G-H-I-J-K-D as shown on the order map.

A copy of the order and the order map have been placed and may be seen free of charge at The Dock Office, Barry Docks, Barry, CF63 4RT during normal office hours. Copies of the order and map may be bought there at the price of £4.50.

Any representations about or objections to the order may be sent in writing to the Director of Development Services, Dock Office, Barry Docks, Barry, CF63 4RT not later than the 27th day of February 2014. Please state the grounds on which they are made.

If no such representations or objections are duly made, or if any so made are withdrawn, the Vale of Glamorgan Council may confirm the order as an unopposed order. If the order is sent to the Welsh Ministers for confirmation any representations and objections which have not been withdrawn will be sent with the order.

Dated this 30th day of January 2014

Director of Development Services
Dock Office, Barry Docks, Barry, CF63 4RT

RHYBUDD O GADARNHAU
GORCHYMYN LLWYBR CYHOEDDUS
O DAN DDEDDO PRIFYRDD 1980
CYNGOR BRO MORGANNWG
(LLWYBR TROED CYHOEDDUS
RHIF 14, LLANFAIR)
GORCHYMYN CREU LLWYBR CYHOEDDUS
2013

Ar 2 Ionawr 2014, cadarnhaodd Cyngor Bro Morgannwg y Gorchymyn uchod a wnaed e dan Adran 26 Ddeddf Prifffyrdd 1980.

Efallai y Gorchymyn a gadarnhawyd, fydd creu llywybr troed cyhoeddus yn y modd sydd wedi'i agluno yn yr Atodiad a cheir ar fap y Gorchymyn.

Gwch weld copiau o'r Gorchymyn a map y Gorchymyn yn rhad ac am ddim yn ystod y wythnos rhwng 9.00am a 4.00pm yn y cyfeiriad wedi, rhwng 30 Ionawr 2014 a 12 Mawrth 2014. Bydd copiau o'r map a'r Gorchymyn ar weith yn y fan honno am £4.50 yr un.

Daw'r Gorchymyn i'w i'w i'w ar 30 Ionawr 2014. Serch hynny, os bydd unrhyw un sy'n tybio iddo gael cysw, yn dymuno holi ynghyd â dylawydd y Gorchymyn neu unrhyw ddarpariaeth yddio, am hysbysu o fewn pederu Ddeddf Prifffyrdd, ynteu na chydychwilydd y golyddion y Ddeddf neu reoladau a wnaed o dani'r gadarnhau'r Gorchymyn, caiff yr unigolyn hwnnw wneud cas i'r Uchel Lys a dan Baragraff 2 Atodiad 2 o'r Ddeddf drwy weithreidd paragraph 5 Atodiad 5, cyn pen 5 wythnos o ddiwedd cyhoeddus'r Rhybudd yn gyntaf.

Dyddiedig 30 Ionawr 2014

Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Datblygu,
Swyddfa'r Doc, Dociau'r Barr, Y Barr, CF63 4RT

NOTICE OF CONFIRMATION
OF PUBLIC PATH ORDER
HIGHWAYS ACT 1980
THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL
(PUBLIC FOOTPATH
NO 14 LLANFAIR)
PUBLIC PATH CREATION ORDER
2013

On the 2nd day of January 2014 the Vale of Glamorgan Council confirmed the above Order made under section 26 of the Highways Act 1980.

The effect of the Order as confirmed is to create the public footpath as set out in the Schedule and shown in the Order map.

A copy of the confirmed Order and Order map may be seen at the address below free of charge between 9.00am and 4.00pm on weekdays from 30th January 2014 until 12th March 2014. Copies of the Order and map may be bought here at a price of £4.50.

This Order comes into force on the 30th January 2014, but if any person aggrieved by the Order desires to question its validity or that of any provision contained in it, on the ground that it is not within the powers of the above Act, as amended, or on the ground that any requirement of that Act, as amended, or of any regulation made under it has not been complied with in relation to the Order, he/she may, under paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Act as applied by paragraph 5 of Schedule 6 to the Act, within 5 weeks from the date on which the Notice is first published make an application to the High Court.

Dated this 30th day of January 2014

Director of Development Services
Dock Office, Barry Docks, Barry, CF63 4RT

CLASSIFIEDS

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- Recruitment
- Buying & Selling
- Trade
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- Birthdays
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Vale's amazing response to GEM charity appeal



The writer Roy Gee with his grandson, Sam Harris and wife Jill Gee, loading the 32 banana boxes.

IN your edition on January 16 last, you printed my appeal for warm clothing and hand tools for my adopted charity 'Village Africa', Tanzania, for which I thank you.

As a result, we had an amazing and overwhelming response

to our appeal from residents in the Vale, especially Barry.

Through your columns, could I please extend a sincere, heartfelt thank you Asanta (sana).

A total of 32 large cardboard banana boxes full of clothing and hand tools are now in a sea-container on a journey to Tanga, Tanzania, then by road and foot to the remote isolated village of 'Yamba'.

Unfortunately, we had to refuse further gifts, so our apologies to those affected. This was due to limited space within the sea-container.

Thank you again Vale of Glamorgan! Further information relating to this registered charity can be discovered on www.villageafrica.org.uk.

ROY GEE, Dinas Powys.
Vyaadakhiana (It is possible)

Volunteers are needed for the Great Daffodil Appeal!



Welsh rugby stars are supporting the Great Daffodil Appeal.

MARIE CURIE is calling for volunteers to boost their Great Daffodil Appeal during February and March.

A spokeswoman said: "There are over 150 collections taking place locally so please contact us if you would be able to spare an hour or two as each collection pays for two hours of nursing care on average."

"More than £70 million has been raised nationally through the Great Daffodil Appeal since it started in 1986, with £7 million raised in 2013 and we want this year to be the best ever!"

"To get involved, telephone the fundraising team on 02920 426068."

MASTER THATCHER GOES TO WORK AT COSMESTON



Coun Gwyn John sees how the thatching is progressing...

A MASTER thatcher is carrying out work on buildings at Cosmeston medieval village, which is owned by the Vale Council.

Coun Gwyn John, who went along to see work progressing, said: "I am very proud that the project is going from strength to strength."

It's great to see these buildings are being maintained for future visitors and that traditional crafts like thatching still survive today, as it is essential that skills like this should never be lost, as it is part of our cultural heritage."

Vale MP will run his third Marathon for two charities

THE two charities nominated by Vale MP, Alun Cairns, for this year's London Marathon are Ty Hapus, the Alzheimer's respite care day centre in Barry, and the Marie Curie hospice in Penarth.

Mr Cairns has completed the marathon on two previous occasions and has raised almost £10,000 for local good causes.

He explained: "These charities are important to me. Members of my family have had cause to need support from such groups."

"Ty Hapus is an innovative centre designed to people with early onset Alzheimer's and other dementias."

"Marie Curie is dedicated to the care of people with terminal illnesses and provides much needed support to people at some of the



Alun Cairns is pictured above after completing last year's London Marathon.

most difficult times."

To sponsor the MP and support Ty Hapus and Marie Curie, log onto aluncairns.com or call at the constituency office at 29 High Street, Barry.

Vale NFU ladies don their finery

THE Vale NFU ladies held their annual dinner recently at the Bear Hotel, Cowbridge.

The atmosphere was electric, with all the ladies dressed in their finery!

The committee must be thanked for organising the event - we are sure everyone appreciated their hard work.

The December meet-

ing took place at Penllyn, in the form of a Christmas party, although prior to the ladies letting their hair down, a Nine Lesson carol service was held in Penllyn Church, with the committee reading the lessons.

The next meeting will take place as usual at Penllyn Village Hall on February 18 at 7.30pm. New members are always welcome. JS

Sully struggle at Blaenau Gwent

SULLY indoor bowlers visited Blaenau Gwent for the second time in two weeks on Saturday, and were again given a sound beating by the league leaders.

Once again, Sully were struggling to field a side to travel away from home and as Blaenau Gwent only have a three rink green, three games have to be played in the morning and afternoon, making it even more difficult getting a team together.

The three rinks in the morning session put up a strong resistance against some excellent home bowling - but the shot count favoured the home side by just 13 shots, mainly due to the rink of Joe Coles, Doug Hotchkiss, Graham Cogbill and skip Dave Wright, who had a tremendous result winning by five shots, 22-17. Mel Newman's rink of

Gary Eastment, Clive Collins and Mike Doyle were down 11-20 after 16 ends but fought back courageously over the final five ends, losing by four shots.

The afternoon session was always going to be difficult, with some new bowlers kindly stepping in to fill the gaps, and although playing well, they found themselves playing against international class players.

The most successful Sully rink was that of M Davies, R Richards, D Curtis and skip Gary Williams who, although losing by eight shots, made their opponents fight all the way.

The afternoon session finally ended with the home side holding a 51-shot advantage and a total overall margin of 64 shots, gaining 20 points to Sully's two.

Sully have one more game left to play on Saturday, February 8 at home, 2pm start. FP

'RNR LIVE' OPEN DAY AT HMS CAMBRIA

THE Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) is holding an open day on February 12 at HMS Cambria near Barry as part of a campaign to encourage more people to become a Reservist.

Visitors can meet serving Reservists and take part in activities involving practical leadership, basic weapon skills, sea survival and damage control.

Charlotte Barlow (27) from Bridgend joined the RNR after graduating from university in 2011 and is currently halfway through an apprenticeship scheme at Port Talbot Steelworks.

She explained: "I joined RNR because I was looking for new challenges and ways to push myself. I had no experience of the mili-



Charlotte Barlow.

tary prior to joining and was curious to know what it was all about.

"I also enjoy physical challenges and welcomed the idea of getting paid to keep fit!"

The RNR Live open day will take place at HMS Cambria, Hayes Lane, Sully, between 10am and 2.30pm.

For more details visit: www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navyreserves.

Vale Council responds to Estyn report

THE Vale Council has put together an action plan in response to an Estyn report on education in the Vale.

Actions recommended by Estyn include raising standards at key stage 2 and key stage 3.

Jennifer Hill, the chief learning and skills officer at the Vale Council, said: "The action plan will address the key recommendations of the report and we will be working hard to ensure these recommendations are acted upon and that improvements are made as a result."

"Our ambition is not only to be the best performing education authority in Wales but to match ourselves against the most successful in England."

Key areas of focus for the Vale Council include:

- Raising standards in schools, particularly in key stage 2 and key stage 3

- Improving the rigour and the level of challenge provided to schools about their performance and quality of leadership

- Using the full powers available to the authority to improve schools that are underperforming

- Ensuring that robust systems are in place for evaluating the outcomes of initiatives and that they demonstrate good value for money

- Strengthening arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the wellbeing of children and young people

Coun Chris Elmore, cabinet member for children's services, said: "The action plan will help drive up standards in our schools and ensure steps are taken to challenge and support schools which are underperforming."

The review and action plan are available on Vale Council's website www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Inspiring talk by headteacher

CADOXTON (Barry) WI's first meeting of the New Year got off to a great start when members eagerly paid their subs and deposits for the many trips that have been organised.

The speaker, Mrs Hayward, the inspirational headteacher of Cadoxton Primary, gave a fascinating insight into her life as a teacher and told us of her goals for Cadoxton, many of which have already been achieved.

The raffles were won by Gay and Rita. New members are always welcome at meetings in Victoria Park Community Centre on the third Monday of the month at 7pm.

Contact 01446 404891 for details. CW

Barry Seconds' fine run of form continues

BARRY Second XV returned to league action with a trip to Cardiff Harlequins.

Coach Rhidian Scott and manager Ken Cott decided to recall Rhidian Mephram to partner Adam Lee in a new half-back partnership, with Marvin Cordle also returning for the club for the first time in over four years.

Their preparations were not helped by normal starting fly-half Flynn out with a groin injury, and also having to wake Brad White from his slumber just 90 minutes before kick off in order to make the starting line-up!

Despite these interruptions, the second XV have found a new impetus since their victory at St Peters before Christmas, and they carried on with the same zest in this game.

In horrendous conditions which negated any possibility of flowing rugby, Barry played a sensible game of territory and possession, waiting patiently for their chance to strike.

Lee's boot saw his side camped in the Quins' 22, and from a pre-planned move behind the scrum, Cordle burst through the tackles to score under the posts. Lee stroked over the extras.

The Quins replied by utilising their outside half's boot, but their

efforts near the Barry line were scuppered by some superb defending, most notably from the back-row partnership of Goodfellow, Miles and Jake Adams.

Instead it was the visitors who stretched their lead, with centre Dave Williams profiting from a handling error in the Harlequins midfield to score his fifth try of the season. Lee was unable to add the extras.

With the wind firmly behind them, metaphorically and literally, Barry went for the jugular.

They were rewarded with a third try just before half time, when after good work from Dix, White and Vidal, prop Andy Corne buried over in the corner. Lee failed to add the extras.

At half-time the management reminded the players the danger of complacency, but unfortunately the advice was not heeded.

Despite the introduction of Prosser, Case and Davies to bring renewed aggression in the contact area, Barry stood still as the home side got back into the game with a converted score.

On closer inspection, however, the player carrying the ball had clearly gone out of play and was not spotted by the touch judge.

Undeterred by this minor set-back, Barry upped their ante and there were again fine contributions by the pack

in ball-carrying.

With the visitors finally making their first foray into the Quins 22, substitute Kyle Case was on hand to burrow over for his first try of the season. Lee missed the conversion.

That should have been the signal for the floodgates to open but instead complacency set in. Through a combination of good back play by the Quins and some tired tackling, the hosts scored two converted tries before the end to set up a grand finale.

Fortunately for the green-and-whites, all 15 players dug deep in the dying embers of the game, and when Case kicked the ball into touch, it signalled another impressive away win for Barry, victors by the slimmest of margins, 22-21.

Barry 2nd XV continue their cup run this weekend against Old Iltydians, with an early kick off at 11am to avoid clashing with the Wales v Italy international.

Team: Dix; Hamonda, Cordle, Williams, White; Lee, Mephram; Thomas, Vidal, Corne; Rolfe (c), Oaten; Goodfellow, Miles, Adams.

Replacements: Davies, Prosser, Case, Hewison.

Man-of-the-match: Miles.

KC BARRIANS LOSE BUT CAN HOLD HEADS HIGH

On a day when Barry fielded three senior teams, it is testament to the size and commitment of the club that the thirds still managed to name three substitutes; the Barriars faced tough opposition in Old Iltydians 2nds.

After losing the toss, Barry played with the slope and the strong wind advantage. They soon camped in the Ilts half, where they stayed for the

majority of the half.

Within the first 10 minutes No 9 C Noble had to come off with a shoulder injury. This resulted in No 10 C Bailey stepping forward to provide scrum half cover and A Betts coming off the bench to slot in at centre.

M Avient shuffled up to No 10 and had a man of the match performance. With the scrum and lineout working well, it seemed as if it was only a matter of time before the home side would notch up the first score.

The odd wrong choice prevented this and we need to be more clinical and take penalties when they are on a plate. That apart, the Barriars had the better of the first half and when the Ilts did threaten, full back Tom Adams knocked them down, with Dave Evans also having a good game in the centre.

Tackle of game was by veteran Huw Davies, preventing a certain score for the visitors. Further injuries to No 8 J Flynn and lock N Fulton resulted in the welcome return of J Davies and John Oxenham to the pack.

With the score 0-0 at half-time, the Barriars knew they would have to defend well. The whole team dug deep and defended their line manfully as the away side started pressurising the home line.

Vitality, the visitors were able to bring on fresh legs and experience which ultimately swung the game.

The Ilts managed to cross for three tries, with one converted, but the heroic defence prevented a bonus point fourth, the final score 17-0.

The author was very proud of the commitment and teamwork displayed by the improving thirds. Every player played out of their skin and appreciation is given to those who had to fill in in unfamiliar positions.

AM

Barry darts league round-up

IN the Premier League this week, BFC Allsorts had an impressive 8-1 win against the Windsor Nomads; John Morgan hit a 180 during the match.

In a close match at the Park Hotel, the Weasels narrowly lost out to the Poachers 4-5. Mike Blackmore hit a 119 out shot and Richie Williams hit a 180. In another close match, The Plastics came out on top away to the Wanderers with a 4-5 victory.

This week (January 31) sees the Barry League singles competition take place at the Cadoxton Conservative Club. The competition is open to all players registered for a team in the Barry Darts league.

Players not already entered can enter on the night for a £1 fee. All entries must be in by 8pm when the draw will be made.

RL

NIPPER BOARDS FOR WHITMORE BAY



WHITMORE Bay has received six brand new nipper racing boards, donated by Cabot in Barry.

The club has been training hard in the pool in readiness for an exciting new season. A big thank you to plant manager Richard Anderton and club member Jeremy Neal from Cabot.

Hockey Club denied in apocalyptic encounter

WEEK two of the second half of Davis Wood Hockey League action saw Penarth Hockey Club battling the conditions as well as determined divisional rivals, eventually emerging with contrasting results.

While the 1st XI were overcoming strugglers Clevevillians by a 3-2 scoreline at Barry Sports Centre, the seconds were travelling to hinterland of Hawthorn to take on old rivals Llanishen & Caerphilly.

The 2nd XI produced a battling display in what can only be described as 'apocalyptic' conditions at Hawthorn High School, but left unrewarded for their endeavours, going down 3-1.

Despite fearing that they may need to start the game short-handed, Penarth were at full strength by the opening whistle, but knew that the task ahead, against one of the De Cymru 2 division's leading teams, was a tough one, having lost 0-6 in the corresponding fixture earlier in the season.

Determined not to suffer a repeat of that scoreline second time around, Penarth began resolutely, with good

marking preventing the home side from getting an early breakthrough, and gradually allowing the visitors to exert pressure of their own.

Indeed, it was Penarth who came closest to opening the scoring with Dave Watkins thwarted by the Llan & Caer 'keeper before the hosts had really forced Calum Grant into action at the other end.

The game remained in stalemate for much of the first half, with Watkins and Freddie Thomas both going close for the Vale side while the Penarth defence continued to stand firm, but the deadlock was broken 10 minutes from the interval when Llan & Caer threw extra players forward, catching the visitors short-handed in their own 'D'.

This time, Grant and the defence were unable to prevent the goal, leaving Penarth one down as the sides turned around.

Encouraged by their performance, the Bears came out fighting in the second half and were rewarded almost immediately, as a quick ball from the back found Dave Thomas in space on the left, before his square ball was forced home from a tight angle by the deserving Watkins.

Parity lasted just a couple of minutes, how-

ever, as Llan & Caer were able to restore their advantage from a penalty corner. Despite the setback, and the momentum switching back to the home side, Penarth's defensive quintet of Ian Smith, Craig Llewellyn, Graeme Jones, the returning Paul Roberts and outstanding Richard Bromley continued to hold firm, giving the visitors the belief that they could still get something from the game.

The weather, meanwhile, continued to worsen, with torrential rain occasionally turning to hail, galeforce winds repeatedly dislodging the goalposts and skies darkening to the point that proceedings were halted in order to request floodlights.

Keen to resume in the pursuit of at least a point, Penarth held firm until the closing minutes, when the home side were able to sneak a third past the hapless Grant.

The result and per-

formance were both a vast improvement over October's match-up, but not adding any points leaves Penarth fifth in the division and facing a key fixture against nearest rivals Neath in Barry this coming weekend.

The 1st XI, meanwhile, travel to Hereford eager to beat up on one of their division's weaker participants as they continue push for a top three spot in De Cymru & The Marches 1.

Penarth Hockey Club always welcomes new, old and returning players, umpires, supporters, friends and helpers, regardless of age and ability.

Training takes place on the artificial turf at Barry Sport Centre every Wednesday, with the juniors in action between 6-7pm and seniors between 7-8pm.

Further information can be obtained from: club secretary Dave Stevens at: d.stevens81@hotmail.co.uk.

CL

The Cowbridge Darts League

ON Tuesday, January 21, there was a total of 12 teams competing in the Clive Blick trophy, a knockout competition involving teams of three or four players.

At the Old Post the successful teams were Sally McCaver, Rob McCaver and John Izzard (Hare & Hounds) and Rosie McCaver, Paul Ward, Alun Evans and Jon Williams (Hare & Hounds).

At the Edmondes Arms the successful teams were Maureen Fleming, Nigel Thomas and Robert Jones (Farmers Arms) and

Linda Smith, Nick Smith and John Davies (Edmondes C).

These four teams will make up the semi-final line-up when the Clive Blick trophy concludes on February 11 at the Old Post.

For further information e-mail Paul at cowbridgedarts@gmail.com; up-to-date information can be found on the website: www.darts.apns.co.uk.

It is time to start thinking about next season, so if a group of you is interested in forming a team (six players minimum) and your local pub is willing to host you, get in touch and register your interest.

PJT

Ospreys are back at the Brewery Field

REGIONAL rugby returns to Bridgend tomorrow when the Ospreys hit the road to host Sale Sharks at the Brewery Field on Friday, January 31 (kick off 7.30pm).

The LV=Cup fixture will also kick a new partnership between the Ospreys and Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) which will see the club become even more closely involved in helping to nurture the next generation of local rugby stars, and also encourage other members of the local community to take part in physical activity.

The partnership will see a number of coaching workshops set up, while there will be support for rugby in schools, and the Ospreys will also be involved in the council's youth leadership development programmes.

Welcoming the partnership, BCBC Leader Mel Nott said: "Sport is a fantastic way to engage with young people and motivate them, and I'm sure that this partnership will result in many benefits for local families."

"The Ospreys have tremendous experience of developing activities with schools, and I'm looking forward to hearing more about their work with the council's Active Young People Department to ensure that local young people and under-represented groups can improve their quality of life."

Coun Nott added: "The Ospreys are highly influential within the world of rugby and beyond and we hope to use this influence to make Bridgend county borough a better place to live, work and visit."

Match tickets cost £10 for adults and £5 for children, OAPs, students and concessions.

TOUGH OUTING FOR ST CYRES GIRLS' TEAMS

RIGHT:
St Cyres year-9
basketball team.

THE year-9 girls' basketball team at St Cyres School recently played Cwmbran Rhymni and started brightly, taking an early lead - but Cwm Rhymni's superior passing and shooting skills began to tell.

Cwm Rhymni ended the match victorious but the St Cyres girls made a valiant effort. Molly Owen-Ffoulkes was the top scorer for St Cyres. Megan Kupa and Bethan Salter were outstanding in their defensive play.

The squad: Molly Owen-Ffoulkes, Megan Kupa, Bethan Salter, Morgan Dursley, Ellie Holloway, Fatima Soomro, Seren Rogers, Chloe Cotter, Lauren Mazloom, Sophie Burman, Sagaal Abdilahi, Najmah Musa, Laila Sama and Rebekah West.

The year-7 and 8 girls' football team was playing on the same



night. They beat Llantwit 10-0, with some outstanding goals from Rebecca Gentles, Bethan Taylor and Kayleigh Parsons. Amelia Davidson controlled the midfield and Hannah Lewis had an excellent game in defence.

Bryn Hafren proved to be a tougher test as they had some strong players.

St Cyres started really well as Catrin Lewis used her speed. Sophie Thomas and Niamh Pemberton also made some good passes.

The game looked to be over, but Bryn Hafren managed to get back to 3-2. Lauren

Richards managed to prevent any more goals to keep the score at 3-2. Well done to all the team, they endured some very wet conditions.

The squad: Amelia

Davidson, Rebecca Gentles, Catrin Lewis, Kayleigh Parsons, Hannah Lewis, Bethan Taylor, Sophie Thomas, Niamh Pemberton and Lauren Richards.

SB

ONLY two matches took place this week. The Vale team were in the Welsh Premier League and the Barry Quarks in division two.

The Vale team comprised two players from the Penarth Chess Club, with the remaining four players members from Barry Chess Club. Our opponents on this occasion were the team from Cardigan.

They are a strong team and outplayed us on boards one through to four. There was little to choose between the ratings on the final board, although we held the upper hand in ratings terms at least on board five.

Craig Woolcock and

Nigel Ralphs earned victories against opponents rated over 100 points above them and Ben Thomas was also a winner. David Sully and Lee Davis both earned excellent draws against opponents ranked over 200 points higher.

Steve Cunliffe also earned a draw, although perhaps he could have expected a better return.

This was an excellent result, with everyone contributing to make the final score of 4.5 to 1.5 keeping our title challenge alive. After four of the seven rounds we are in second place

behind Nidum with the same match points but we have a game in hand!

In division two, the Quarks entertained the North Cardiff Cheetahs. Perhaps entertained is a little generous when both teams are in dire need of points. The Cheetahs eventually won the match by 3-2.

Ken Hannah, who is becoming Mr Reliable for this team was our only winner with draws from Sam White and Peter Watkins.

Still, this was a closer match than in our previous encounter. Unfortunately, our

other rivals in the relegation fight, the Cardiff Crowns unexpectedly picked up three points in their match against the Cardiff AJs, meaning that the Quarks drop back to ninth in the table and are now four points from safety with seven games still to play.

Barry Chess Club meets at 7.30pm each Monday at the West End Club, St Nicholas Road, Barry CF62 6QY.

For more details, visit our website at <http://barrychessclub.yolasite.com>.

PJ

Bombettes seek Vale sponsors

I AM the manager of Barry Ladies RFC 'The Bombettes' and am writing to ask for local businesses to consider sponsoring our community-based team.

We currently have 32 local ladies as registered players, with two of our ladies also playing regionally for the Blues. We have huge support from Barry RFC, which is also home to three men's senior sides, as well as youth teams.

'The Bombettes' have just begun the second half of their third season of rugby, having just been crowned League Winners of Division 2 of the Women's National Leagues.

The ladies are now part way through the WRU Women's Super Cup which requires the team to play both home and away fixtures across the region.

We are looking for sponsors to help us purchase much-needed items such as balls, kit bags, and water bottles - but mainly a new kit, as we look to be promoted to Division 1 for the 2014-2015 season.

In return for sponsorship, your logo/company name will be proudly worn or displayed on such items, with exposure of your company taking place on match days and training sessions.

Furthermore, through photographs and reports, your association with the team will be promoted through local press, social media and promotional materials such as leaflets and posters.

I feel this would be great PR for local Vale companies and would very much welcome their support; we are appreciative of sponsorship for any amount. Please contact me on 07889 742153 to discuss the details further. Rachel Baron.

Llantwit under-13s on lookout for new players

LLANTWIT MAJOR RFC under-13s are currently looking to expand the player base throughout their squad.

Whether you have previous experience at playing the game or not, why not turn up and give it a go.

Any player currently in school year-8 is eligible.

Don't let the fact that you may not have played the game before hold you back, as our coaches will be

there to assist and help with all aspects of the game.

As an added incentive, the team are currently planning a tour to Toulouse, France, with at least three fixtures against local opposition arranged.

For further information on playing and training times and venues, please contact Kris Pilcher on 07557128861 or Kerry Williams on 07949555687 for more information.

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Jan drives in as the new Cottrell ladies captain!

THE new Cottrell Park lady captain drive-in took place on January 16.

Although muddy underfoot, the weather was kind and Jan Cosby hit a very good drive. The prize for the flag nearest where the ball landed was won by Rusty Fone.

This was followed by a nine-hole Stableford, won on countback by Helen Evans with 15 points from Jenny Knott, also with 15. The ladies met for lunch, with the new captain being clapped in.

Following an excellent lunch which was enjoyed by all, speeches were made and Jan



Tessa Matthews.

Cosby said she was honoured to be the new lady captain and looked forward to the year ahead.

Tessa Matthews, the outgoing captain, thanked Jan for her help and support; Jan then presented Tessa



Jan Cosby and Helen Evans

with a present from the ladies and one from herself.

Tessa was delighted and thanked all the ladies for their help and support through-

out the previous year. Jan then presented Helen Evans with her prize for the competition.

CB

WHEN all football throughout south Wales is off, the Vale of Glamorgan mini section are still able to play thanks to Parkwood offering the Astro pitch to them.

This weekend we saw over 200 players using the venue for clubs from all over the Vale.

The under-7s play all their matches at Barry Sports Centre astro from 9am to 10am. After 10am, it's offered to clubs throughout the season when pitches are unplayable. Currently, the under-7s have only missed two weekends.

It's been a great success with the players developing and learning each week. The format is four-a-side with no goalkeepers, so there are plenty of goals; less numbers on the pitch mean more touches, which will allow the child to be more comfortable on the ball.

We will soon be introducing a futsal ball for the under-7s. The ball is slightly heavier than a normal ball and certainly does not bounce as much. This allows the players of this age more time to control the ball and express themselves.

We are now the envy of a lot of leagues as we have for the first time met 100 per cent accreditation at mini level ages year-2 to year-6. Thanks to all clubs, coaches, helpers, players and parents for supporting this.

A lot of hard work has gone on at the clubs, putting coaches through DBS checks and courses to gain the relevant qualifications to take a team on a Saturday morning.

For more information on club accreditation go to <http://www.welshfootballtrust.org.uk/McDonaldsClubAccreditation.ink>

Wes Drew is now the new Safeguarding Officer for the Vale of Glamorgan League and one of Wes' roles is to maintain this accreditation and work with Andy Pask (FDO with the FAW) to help all coaches and clubs continue in this vein.

If anyone has a child who is looking to start playing football but doesn't know where to start, telephone 07528 230362; hopefully we can put you in touch with a club or development centre which will benefit your child.

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Barry RFC earn bragging rights with win over Llantwit Major

IT would be a welcome change to commence a rugby report by describing warm, balmy conditions and a gentle offshore breeze.

Alas, things got back to normal at the weekend with arctic northerly winds carrying rain and hail, lashing players and spectators alike.

Barry started the match with both the elements and the slope in their favour. In the words of one away stalwart, 'it was a fifteen point wind'.

It certainly did appear that; if Barry were to succeed, then they needed to build up a healthy half-time lead.

Llantwit started the game with intensity and forced the home side on the defensive gaining a valuable penalty as a result. Barry now warmed to their task and attacked the Llantwit line with waves of

forceful rucks and mauls.

The visitors' back row were adjudged to have transgressed enough times to leave the referee no option other than to award a penalty try.

The impetus was now with the home 15 and within the span of five minutes they had extended their lead. Excellent forward pressure split the visiting defence to allow the front row union of Evans, O'Sullivan and Hollister to set up the former to poach two fine tries.

One of these was converted by Scott to give Barry an interesting half-time lead of 16 points.

Golf ball sized hailstones greeted the start of the second session. Within five minutes the visitors reduced the deficit with a well struck penalty.

Barry, however, had a clear plan to handle the situation, which they executed with skill and determination. Driving via the forwards

was clearly the set objective and Llantwit began to yield territory and possession as a consequence.

The remainder of the half was not very attractive but every Barry player was intent on keeping pressure on the visiting defence.

In the closing stages Evans was a touch away from the bonus point hat trick but, all things considered, a final score of 19-6 to Barry was equitable.

Team: Ryan, Adams, Rich O'Sullivan, Provis, Tienan Scott, Eion Scott, Lee, H.Jones ©, Luke O'Sullivan, Callum Scott, Tanner, G. Jones, Hollister, Evans, R.O'Sullivan.
Replacements: Poole, Lundy, Gallivan, Busiil.

International matches occupy the next few weeks, so Barry's next game is away to league leaders St. Josephs on February 15.

CO



Gymnasts from Barry YMCA have shone in competition recently.

Barry YMCA gymnasts enjoy plenty of success!

FAMILY and friends of gymnasts from Barry

YMCA's female competitive section recently had an enjoyable time watching them compete in the annual club competition.

During this event the gymnasts had the opportunity to showcase the new skills they have been learning during their training sessions.

There were medals and ribbon awards galore as every gymnast was awarded for their performances on each piece of apparatus. The gymnasts were split into groups based on their age/ability.

The results were as follows:

4/5 years: Vault-1st Seren Crowther, 2nd Emmy; Bars-1st Seren, 2nd Emmy; Beam-1st Seren, 2nd Emmy; Tumble-1st Seren, 2nd Emmy; Overall 1st Seren, 2nd Emmy.

6 years: Vault-1st Lily Foscolo, 2nd Seren Watts, 3rd Lili Hopkins; Bars-1st Lily F, 2nd Seren, 3rd Lili H; Beam-1st Seren, 2nd Lily F, 3rd Lili H; Tumble-1st Lily F, 2nd Seren, 3rd Lili H; Overall-1st Lily F, 2nd Seren, 3rd Lili H.

7 years: Vault-1st Yasmin Michael, 2nd Heather Heslop, 3rd Nutaya Gutasso; Bars-1st Heather, 2nd Yasmin, 3rd Nutaya; Beam-1st Yasmin, 2nd Heather, 3rd Nutaya; Tumble-1st Heather, 2nd Nutaya, 3rd Yasmin; Overall-1st Yasmin/Heather, 2nd Nutaya.

8/9 years Novice: Vault-1st Laila-Jade; 2nd Sophia Foscolo, 3rd Celyn Powell, 4th Tamzin Williams; Bars-1st Celyn, 2nd Tamzin, 3rd Sophia, 4th Laila-Jade; Beam-1st Sophia, 2nd Laila-Jade, 3rd Tamzin, 4th Celyn; Floor-1st Celyn, 2nd Tamzin, 3rd Laila-Jade/Sophia; Overall-1st Celyn, 2nd Sophia, 3rd Tamzin, 4th Laila-Jade.

9 years Intermediate: Vault-1st Evie Wong, 2nd Bria Karim, 3rd Erin Gamble; Bars-1st Evie, Bria, Erin; Beam-1st Evie, 2nd Erin, 3rd Bria;

Floor-1st Erin, 2nd Evie, 3rd Bria; Overall-1st Evie, 2nd Erin, 3rd Bria.

10/11 years: Vault-1st Kelsey Cross/Caitlin Meadows, 2nd Chloe Gabb/Seren Williams, 3rd Tesni Gardiner/Lara Watkins; Bars-1st Lara, 2nd Caitlin, 3rd Seren/Chloe, 4th Kelsey, 5th Tesni; Beam-1st Lara, 2nd Caitlin/Kelsey, 3rd Tesni, 4th Seren, 5th Chloe; Floor-1st Tesni, 2nd Chloe, 3rd Seren/Caitlin, 4th Lara, 5th Kelsey; Overall-1st Caitlin, 2nd Lara, 3rd Tesni, 4th Chloe/Seren, 5th Kelsey.

12/13 years: Vault-1st Catrin Long, 2nd Ellice Stockford, 3rd Zoe Arnold/Bethan Wride, 5th Seren Mirza Davies; Bars-1st Catrin/Zoe, 3rd Ellice, 4th Bethan, 5th Seren; Beam-1st Bethan, 2nd Zoe, 3rd Catrin, 4th Ellice, 5th Seren; Floor-1st Ellice, 2nd Catrin, 3rd Bethan, 4th Seren, 5th Zoe; Overall-1st Bethan, 2nd Catrin, 3rd Ellice, 4th Zoe, 5th Seren.

Advanced: Vault-1st Ffion Byrne, 2nd Alana Stokes; Bars-1st Alana, 2nd Ffion; Beam-1st Ffion, 2nd Alana; Floor-1st Ffion, 2nd Alana; Overall-1st Ffion, 2nd Alana.

All of the gymnasts were split into three teams to vie for the team champions title. Team Santa (Lara, Ellice, Bethan, Tesni, Bria, Celyn, Tamzin, Heather and Emmy) were victorious with Team Rudolph (Ffion, Catrin, Zoe, Chloe, Seren W, Evie, Laila-Jade, Nutaya, Seren Watts and Lili Hopkins) in second place and Team Angel (Alana, Seren MD, Kelsey, Caitlin, Erin, Sophia, Yasmin, Lily Foscolo and Seren Crowther) in third position.

It was an extra special day for Lili Hopkins who celebrated her sixth birthday on the competition day. Sophia Foscolo was also celebrating her eighth birthday a couple of days later, so they were both surprised with a birthday cake that was enjoyed by all of the gymnasts.

Congratulations to everybody who took part in the competition. A

huge thanks must be sent to Aimee, Andrea, Anne, Caitlin, Cath, Charlotte, Eleri, Elisha, Karen, Kiera, Leanne, Olivia, Rachel and Sarah for helping with the coaching, judging and scrutinising for the competition, and everybody else who assisted with areas such as setting up equipment and selling raffle tickets.

For further information about gymnastics opportunities at Barry YMCA please contact 01446 724001.

The Welsh Gymnastics annual awards evening, held at the Sports Wales National Centre, recognised and celebrated the achievements of exceptional individuals in the world of gymnastics in Wales.

The event, held at Sophia Gardens on January 3, saw two of the Barry YMCA Gymnastic's team receive top awards. Clinton Purnell took home the award for 'Men's artistic gymnast

of the year', while resident national coach Pete Haysham received the award for 'Performance coach of the year'.

Both awards are deserved recognition for their hard work and achievements throughout 2013. Clinton and Pete are currently training for the upcoming Welsh Championships in March, which then leads onto the British Championships.

At the recent northern European championships Clinton Purnell won three silver medals with Iwan Mephram also winning silver medal on high bar.

Iwan was a runner up in senior gymnast category while both Josh Cook and Liam Tanner were runners up in the most promising gymnast category. Ffion Gardiner was also a runner up in the female section.

We wish all the gymnasts at Barry YMCA the best of luck in what promises to be a busy year for gymnastics at Barry YMCA.

CM

DINAS FC DEFEATED BY AFC LLWYDCOED

A gale-force wind and driving rain greeted Dinas Powys FC as they arrived at the Welfare Ground for this encounter against AFC Llwydcoed.

Llwydcoed settled quickly and were soon on the attack with Chris Vardon getting an early shot on target, James Curtain saving comfortably, soon followed by a drive from Garin Withers under pressure from Dinas full-back Nicky Bruce which Curtain gathered.

The wind favoured

the hosts who seemed to adapt to the conditions better than Dinas.

Dinas strikers Paul Penikett and Barry King were linking up well but the home defence were well organised and the visitors were struggling to get any scoring opportunities into the headwind until James Marr was fouled and Nicky Bruce drove the free kick in low which the home keeper, Ryan Griffiths, had to tip round the post for an unproductive corner.

At the other end a Llwydcoed corner was gathered by the wind and the ball sailed over the Dinas crossbar.

Dinas came close from another set piece, Dave Penikett's free kick was tipped over by the cross-bar by Griffiths.

The breakthrough came eventually in a bizarre fashion from a cross by Michael Davies which again the wind took, but this time the ball curled into the top corner of the net giving Curtain no chance to save.

Suddenly, with five minutes of the half remaining, a hail storm blew in and the referee had no option but to bring the half to an early close on 43 minutes.

Luckily the storm passed and the wind began to die down for the second half.

The hosts were soon on the attack again, electing to run with the ball on numerous occasions which seemed to be paying dividends as chances came from a cross by Vardon to Jonathan Mason who was dispossessed by Nicky Bruce, followed by a run and cross by Michael Davies, the ball reaching Mason whose deft lob clipped the top of the crossbar and over.

The Dinas midfield of Tony Herrin, Marc Bonet and skipper Paul Dawes were working hard to try and create chances but it was from another set piece that they looked the most dangerous.

Nicky Bruce fired in a shot that Griffiths had to punch clear, the ball coming to Dave Penikett who drove it back in but his effort was over the

bar. Llwydcoed grabbed their second goal after 20 minutes when from a corner, their towering centre-half Luke Davies volleyed home.

Dinas then rang the changes, bringing on Ryan Garland and Carlos Indjai for Barry King and Dimitri Fallas respectively.

Good work by Garland forced a corner for Dinas but the ball was cleared to Vardon who raced through for a one on one with Curtain but his shot was off target from 16 yards.

Dinas then made their final substitution, bringing on the experienced Danny Street for Paul Dawes, but despite forcing a couple more corners they couldn't get the breakthrough.

Llwydcoed then made a couple of substitutions and they saw out the final minutes to claim the points which they deserved on the day.

Dinas play host to Ammanford on February 1 with a 2pm kick off.

Squad: 1 James Curtain, 2 James Marr, 3 Nicky Bruce, 4 Dave Penikett, 5 James Bloxham, 6 Tony Herrin, 7 Paul Dawes (c), 8 Marc Bonet, 9 Paul Penikett, 10 Dimitri Fallas, 11 Barry King, 12 Carlos Indjai, 14 Luke Swaffield, 15 Ryan Garland, 16 Danny Street.

PK

Bryant takes over as Barry youth coach

FORMER Wales, Gwent Dragons and Sale centre John Bryant has joined Barry RFC as youth coach and is raring to go.

John, who recently left his coaching role at Newport RFC, will take control of the youth immediately and the club are asking all players to turn up for training as normal.

Training is Tuesday 7pm at the club and Thursday 8pm at the all weather pitch in Bryn Hafren's girls school.

All players should contact first team manager Stuart Lock on 07960

877268 as regards the training sessions.

The youth team will benefit from players from the successful under-16 team joining the youth in the next few months as their season winds down, and can be introduced into youth rugby with a few friendly games at the end of the season before they start youth rugby in earnest next season.

Any boys between 16 and 19 who want to join are welcome, and for more information either contact Stuart as above or turn up on the training nights.

SL

Ladies treated well by weather



Lynda Hewlett (right) accepting her prize from the lady captain.

THE weather was kind to the Brynhill ladies on Mince Pie morning.

Over 20 ladies played and many more came to enjoy the festivities. Raffles were run and two charities supported, Velindre Hospital and the Daniel Cwtch fund.

Thanks to Shirley and Sheila for making the Christmas cakes and to Audrey for the mince pies - they were delicious!

The competition was won by Lynda Hewlett over the back nine from Rose Pitman, with 17 points.

December's competitions were won by Sue Holland, 18 points, and Linda Gershenson, 19 points.

HT



GEM sport



Wales and the Six Nations

Can the Dragon make it three championships in a row?



Amid the chaos, Gatland's rallying call to Welsh players on eve of first test against the Azzurri... 'IGNORE ALL THE OFF FIELD SHENANIGANS' – and make history!

AS all eyes turn to the start of the 2014 Six Nations against Italy at the Millennium Stadium on Saturday, nothing could more graphically illustrate the effect of the wide division at the top of a Welsh game riven by off-field conflict, than the opposite paths taken by three leading stars in the last week.

While lock Alun Wyn Jones has opted to resign with the Ospreys, Blues' full back Leigh Halfpenny is the latest to lose patience with the chaos and uncertainty caused by the long drawn-out rift between the Welsh Rugby Union and the four professional regions, and is joining the 'player drain' to France.

Meanwhile, his regional team mate and Wales skipper, Sam Warburton, has become the first squad player to sign a central contract with the governing body, turning down lucrative financial offers from France in order to continue playing in and for Wales.

(Astonishingly, his loyalty has been rewarded with venomous personal attacks on social media by regional supporters).

It all went to underline that even on the eve of a potentially historic tournament, with the Welsh squad striving for their third successive championship title and a possible fourth Grand Slam, the warring parties in boardroom suits have seemed incapable of settling their differences around the negotiating table.

If anything, their positions hardened last week with Blues' chairman Peter Thomas warning that the final deadline the regions had given the WRU to sanction alternative competitions to the RaboDirect Pro12 (tomorrow, Friday) was still in place, otherwise they would pursue "other cross-border options" with the English Premiership clubs.

"The product we have got is unacceptable to the public – you either have to improve or change it. If it doesn't sell, we're going to die... Regional rugby is dying by a thousand cuts," he maintained.

Meanwhile the WRU reiterated its firm opposition to non-officially sanctioned competitions with a terse statement, following a Six Nations council meeting last week, that while "committed to finding a Six Nations resolution for European rugby in the interests of the game...the council also reaffirms its commitment to abide by International Rugby Board regulations."

With off-field peace talks seemingly deadlocked, and with their Azzurri opponents about to descend on Cardiff, Wales' head coach Warren Gatland moved swiftly to turn the team's focus on to more immediate on-field matters: "Whatever the political issues are, those are things we, as players and coaches, cannot affect. The things we CAN control are what happens here in camp and perform-



Three different paths: Sam Warburton is the first to sign a central contract with the WRU; while Alun Wyn Jones has opted to extend his contract with the Ospreys region; and Leigh Halfpenny is escaping to pastures new in France. PHOTOGRAPHS by HUW EVANS AGENCY

BACK PAGE COMMENT by Don John

ances on the field. I suppose in a way, it's a nice distraction to have," he averred.

"You get a sense when the players come into camp what it means to play for Wales. It means a hell of a lot to them to put that red jersey on with three feathers. Often they give us performances that belie the expectation of what their club form has been.

"I know the players always look forward to coming into camp. They know it's going to be tough, they know they are going to work hard, but they are motivated, they enjoy the environment.

He went on to stress: "They are being challenged all the time and that creates healthy competition to drive us on and be successful. It's a happy camp.

"As well as being able to put all the political shenanigans to one side for a couple of months, the Welsh players also have the opportunity to cement their place in legend by boldly going where no team has gone before."

The players have had the success of the 1970s team rammed down their throat year after year – but "that was 40-odd years ago" and it was time for a new era to have success in Welsh rugby.

"We've got a group of world class players here. Many had come back from the Lions tour

full of confidence. Hopefully, they can build on that, not just in this tournament, but through to the Rugby World Cup."

Skipper Sam Warburton also expressed confidence, saying: "We've got used to the taste of success in the Six Nations and it does have a knock-on effect for the following year, but no-one is underestimating how tough it will be to win the title again."

Given the background turmoil, some may feel relieved that it is Italy providing the first challenge to Wales' record-breaking quest, but after shock home wins over Ireland and France, and leapfrogging them in last year's Six Nations' table, the Azzurri cannot be taken lightly.

Wales will need to come out of the blocks firing from the outset, unlike their opening game against Ireland last year when a turgid first half undoubtedly cost them a Grand Slam – even though, to their immense credit, they recovered to claim a back-to-back championship in that epic finale against England at the Millennium Stadium.

Despite the fact that they have won 17 of their 20 previous encounters with Italy since they first met in 1994, the Welsh camp will nevertheless be wary of slipping on the proverbial banana skin – even if their oppo-

nents can point to only one narrow success against Wales in 2007 (23-20 in Rome); and an 18-18 draw in Cardiff the year previously, having joined the Six Nations in 2000.

"The target is to make rugby history by becoming the first country to win three successive Six Nations titles. I think that's the real focus" says Gatland.

If his players can shrug off the "political shenanigans" and retain that focus, by Saturday evening they should have cleared the first hurdle.

WALES team v Italy:

Leigh Halfpenny (Cardiff Blues); Alex Cuthbert (Cardiff Blues), Scott Williams (Scarlets), Jamie Roberts (Racing Metro), George North (Northampton Saints); Rhys Priestland (Scarlets), Mike Phillips (Racing Metro); Paul James (Bath), Richard Hibbard (Ospreys), Adam Jones (Ospreys), Luke Charteris (Perpignan), Alun Wyn Jones (Ospreys, captain), Dan Lydiate (Racing Metro), Justin Tipuric (Ospreys), Toby Faletau (NG Dragons).

Replacements: Ken Owens (Scarlets), Ryan Bevington (Ospreys), Rhodri Jones (Scarlets), Andrew Coombs (NG Dragons), Sam Warburton (Cardiff Blues), Rhys Webb (Ospreys), James Hook (Perpignan), Liam Williams (Scarlets).